

b
A DALE BOOK
01545 • \$1.75

THE FIRST IN AN EXPLOSIVE
NEW SERIES ABOUT
CHICAGO IN THE TWENTIES

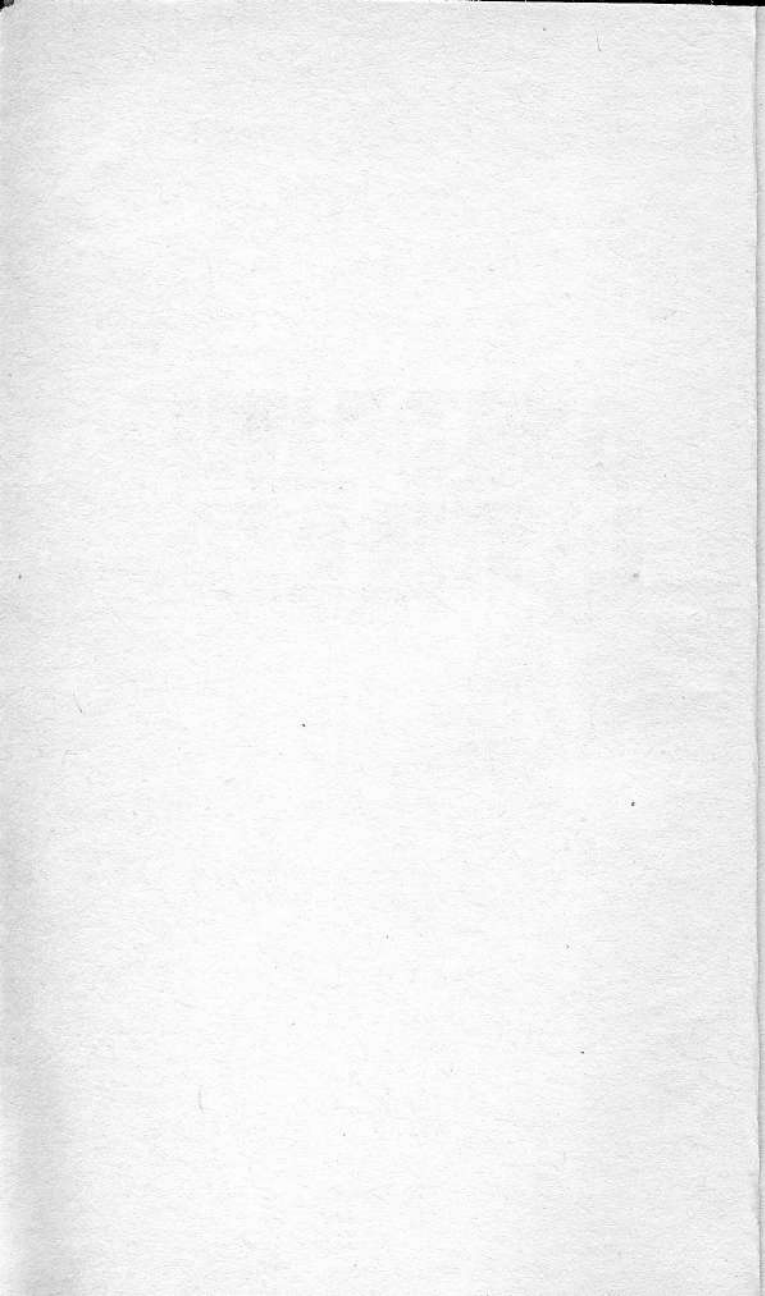
ONE DEATH IN THE RED

ED MAZZARO





**ONE DEATH
IN THE RED**



**ONE DEATH
IN THE RED
ED MAZZARO**


Dale Books
New York

For H.P.T., with thanks.

No character in this story is intended to represent any actual person;
all incidents of the story are entirely fictional in nature.

Copyright ©1976, 1979 by Ed Mazzaro

All rights reserved

Published by Dale Books, Inc., 380 Lexington Ave.,
New York, N.Y. 10017

Library of Congress Catalog Number: 78-72976

ISBN: 0-89559-154-5

Printed in the United States of America.

Distributed in Canada

by Fitzhenry and Whiteside.

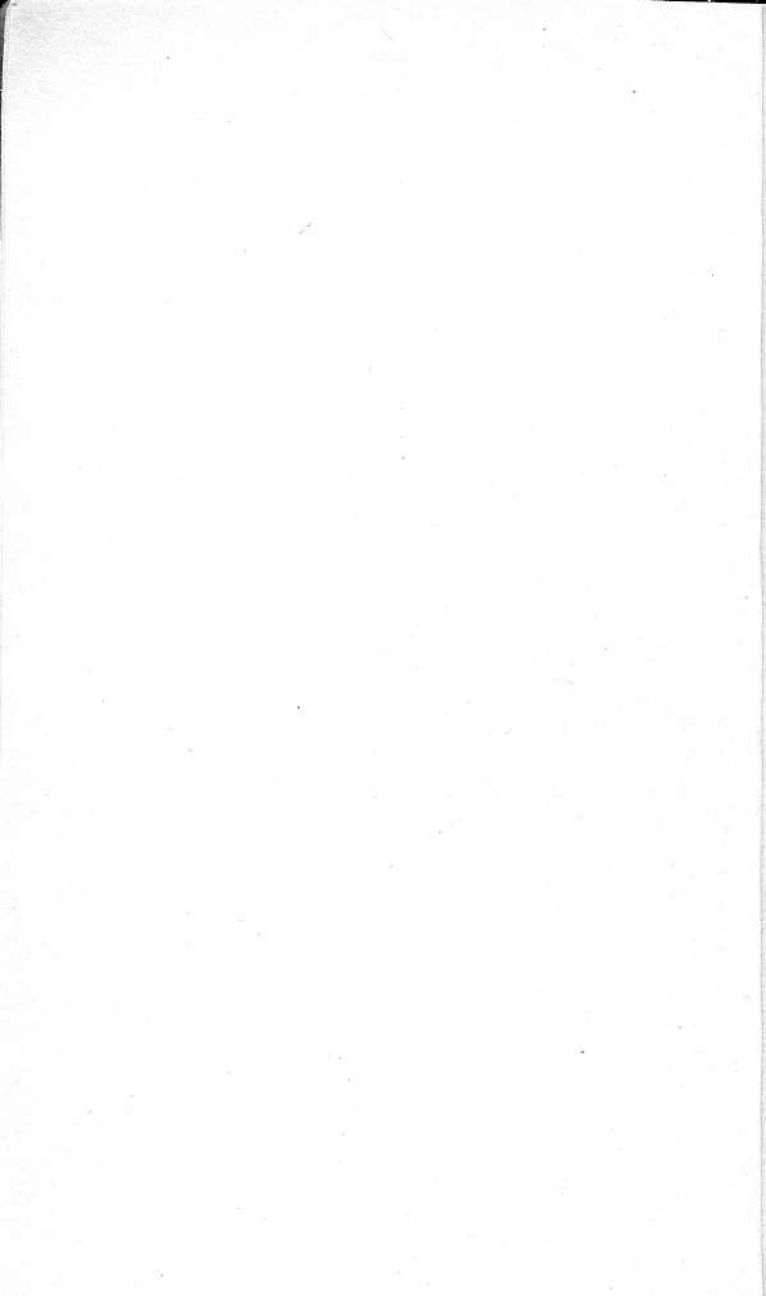
AUTHOR'S NOTE

Among the many books, newspaper files and old magazines contributing background material for this story F. D. Pasley's *Al Capone — the Biography of a Self-Made Man*, Don Maclean's *Pictorial History of the Mafia* (Pyramid Books, New York), and the late Kenneth Allsop's *The Bootleggers* have been especially valuable. I am grateful to Messrs Hutchinson of London for permission to quote from *The Bootleggers*, and to Faber & Faber of London for permission to quote from *Al Capone*.

I am also indebted to the following music publishers for permission to quote from contemporary popular songs: the Feldman Music Co for *Freddie the Freshman*, Lawrence Wright for *I Wish I Could Shimmy Like My Sister Kate*, Musical Copyrights for *Hard Hearted Hannah*, and Francis Day & Hunter for *Yellow Dog Blues*.

Finally I should like to thank my wife for her invaluable help and criticism in the preparation of the manuscript.

E.M.



One

It was a great year all right. An aviator called Lindbergh was making plans to fly the Atlantic; Temme was training for his attempt to swim the twenty-one miles of the English Channel. They started a radio beam service from London to Australia; and the Shakespeare Memorial Theater in Stratford was burned down. Things were moving every place. Hindenburg was elected German president; Stalin had been bossing the Supreme Soviet two years already; Mussolini had been dictator of Italy for four. In the north of England unemployed from the idle shipyards were talking of a general strike. The United States was in its fifth year of prohibition and its third of 'Coolidge prosperity'. Samuel Insull cornered the electricity distribution market in 385 cities and persuaded 300,000 investors to put their money into a financial empire that was later to crash with a \$14 million deficit. Fifty Boston dancers were killed when the vibrations of a Charleston competition collapsed the floor of the Pickwick Club. And in Chicago, Charles T. Yerkes from his La Salle Street skyscraper paid out \$300,000 in bribes to consolidate the street-car franchises that were to make him transport king of the Middle West. A few blocks away at the Metropole Hotel, Al Capone moved into a fifty-room suite after half a decade of bootlegging with sixty percent of the city's police force on his payroll. Christ yes, that was some year, 1925! Or was it 1926?

Hofner and Mallowney and Hymie Loeb were dead lucky. They'd figured on snatching Briggs and taking him for a ride after they'd rammed the old jalopy he drove out home to Burnham every night, when he was through at the club. But Briggs was working late that night because the Persimmon was jumping, and they found him still serving liquor when they arrived. So Briggs wasn't lucky: he was just dead. Although that didn't happen until a few minutes later.

The joint had been jam-packed since midnight. Everyone was there—tired businessmen, whores, rich slummers from the Gold Coast, pimps, touts, salesmen, hoods, floozies and punters. Everyone, that is, who wasn't at the Friars' Inn, the Three Deuces, the Sheridan Wave or any other of Chicago's eight thousand seven hundred and fifty speakeasies.

The Persimmon was at 35th and Calumet, south of the Loop, and the entrance was through a phone booth in back of a soda fountain. It was a long, low-ceilinged room, dimly lit by wall-bracket lamps with violet silk shades. One end was blocked off by the bar; the other by a high, shallow stage supporting a six-piece band. In between, the floor was crowded with small tables covered in purple checkered cloths, except for a space in front of the stand, left for dancing. There were two doors at each side of this of this space—one leading to the phone booth; the other opening on to a passage that led to the washrooms, the office and the artists' dressing rooms. For the Persimmon was in the upper speak bracket: there was a floorshow as well as a band. As for the exotic fruit that gave the place its name, the only allusion to that was the bright orange drapes on either side of the stage.

Jason Mettner sat alone at a table on the edge of the dance floor—a tall, lean, dark man with a saturnine face. He was trying to listen to the band as he sipped his highball and jotted an occasional note on the back of an envelope. Mettner was a reporter on *The Globe*: he had been sent to fill half a column in the music section of

the Sunday magazine edition on this new group they had at the Persimmon—a bunch of high-school kids from Lake Calumet who were trying to copy the rough, tough jazz brought up the river by the Negro bands from New Orleans.

They weren't bad at that . . . but it was one hell of a job, concentrating on the music in this kind of joint. There were fifty couples whirling and jerking between him and the stage, a hundred pairs of elbows and heels frenetically pumping out the staccato rhythm of the Charleston as the cornet, clarinet and trombone flared into the last chorus of 'Eccentric' and the short, fringed skirts flipped to and fro above the sheen of silk-hosed legs. Behind, the raucous shouts and giggles of Chicagoans having themselves a ball struggled through the layers of cigarette and cigar smoke fogging the room.

The noisiest table was to Mettner's right—a drunken lawyer whom the newspapermen knew to be a prominent member of the city administration, two platinum blondes, and a knickerbockered Englishman with a sandy mustache and an eyeglass. One of the girls, whose mascara had run, was complaining about the band.

'I declare,' she screamed shrilly, 'I haven't recognized a single tune they played! C'mon, Harry—let's get the hell out of this dump and go someplace else, huh?'

The lawyer shouted her down and splashed more liquor into her glass. 'Good for the jolly old dancing, though,' the Englishman cried, screwing his monocle more firmly into his eye. 'Pretty hot stuff, what? I say—look at that chappie with the bugle! He's jazzing it up like billy-o! Be a dashed shame to leave now, if you ask me!'

The other blonde, whose breasts were trying to escape the clutches of an oyster satin dress wailed, 'Gloria don' wanna go! Gloria wants to finish her li'l drinkie with Harry and Ron!'

Mettner shaded his eyes with one hand. 'Jesus!' he muttered into his glass.

He scribbled some more notes. There was nothing new about middle-class white kids copying the black music which had been flooding upriver ever since the US navy closed down the Storyville red light district in New Orleans as a danger to sailors, at the outbreak of war in 1917. Thousands of these kids swarmed downtown every night, attracted by the frantic glitter and glare of the speakeasies and burlesques, the cabarets and dives on Wabash Avenue and gaudy State Street. Hundreds tried to reproduce the exciting, free-swinging rhythms of Joe Oliver and Louis Armstrong at the Lincoln Gardens, Jimmy Noone at the Apex, and the others who wailed nightly at the Sunset, the Savoy, the Dreamland and the Vendome. But only about half of one percent could make it. There was Jimmy McPartland and Bud Freeman with the gang from the Austin High School near Central and Washington Boulevard, Bix Beiderbecke and the Wolverines from Davenport, and George Brunis with the New Orleans Rhythm Kings, who'd gotten themselves a job at the Friars' Inn. They had it all right. But the rest had been so much crap . . . until this new group booked in to the Persimmon.

And they did have something, Mettner thought as the six musicians growled into a lowdown blues. They called themselves the Pack of Aces. And if the piano, banjo and clarinet were only so-so, the drummer was good and the cornet and trombone were something else! For those two alone the title was justified. Rusty Sampson, the cornet player, had latched on to that Negro trick of vocalizing his horn: the notes weren't bell-like and pure in the manner of Beiderbecke and the other white jazzmen, but husky and guttural, real stuff that wouldn't have disgraced one of the riverboats that had brought the music up from the South. Bill Lardner, too, played a mean trombone. He growled them into the rideouts in a style worthy of Kid Ory himself!

Mettner stuffed the envelope into his pocket and lit a cigarette as the band accelerated suddenly into a tricky

stoptime tempo. The floorshow as about to begin. A chorus line of eight girls in fishnet tights and ostrich feathers spiderlegged on to the dance floor while the clients shouldered their way back to their tables calling for more liquor. They started bumping and grinding and slinging their cans as they cried out in a high, tinny unison:

Who's got all the girlies
Chasing him around?
Fred-die the freshman,
The freshest guy in town!
He plays the ukulele,
He plays the saxophone,
And the pretty babies
Just won't let him alone . . .

Mettner sighed and closed his eyes. The nightclub beat got rugged sometimes. He was rarely in bed before 6 A.M. And this kind of routine he needed like he needed a hole in the head. It was a tough way to earn eighty-five bucks a week.

The crowd grew boisterous when the girls started high-kicking. There were whistles and catcalls and ribald remarks. Coins clattered to the floor. Mattner didn't open his eyes until the number was over and the Aces played a sustained chord in G. Princey Hartz was making her entrance.

Applause rocked the room as she shimmied to the center of the floor—blue eyes caged in glistening black lashes, scarlet cupid-bow lips, and a halo of ash-blonde hair above a body as unsaintly as anything south of the Christian Science church on Lakeshore Drive. Princey was stacked and that was for sure: five feet seven inches of curves without a straight line among the whole vibrant 148 pounds of her—148 pounds and three ounces if you counted the scarab green, floor-length dress that looked as though it had been plastered to her figure with a spray gun.

One side of the skirt was slit clear up to the hip. Princey's black silk leg with its green cuban-heel slipper slid out and began shaking in time to the music as the band hit a torchy medium-bounce- tempo. The excitement in the room mounted; she began to sing. Her voice was husky, almost gravelly, dark brown with just the right amount of gin. She sang about how she wished she could shimmy like her sister Kate, who shook like jelly on a plate. Jason Mettner swallowed the rest of his drink and stared at the green garter on that shivering dark leg, while the lights dimmed to leave the girl alone in a single lime and the roar of approval swelled around him.

She gave them four choruses, including some wacky new lines of her own, the satin dress shimmering around her like a green waterfall. If Sister Kate was better than that, Mettner thought to himself tipsily, she sure must be a sight for sore eyes! He was on the edge of his chair as she belted out the last two lines:

I may be late, but I'll be up to date
When I can shimmy like my sister Kate . . .

And he pounded on his table with the rest when she took the tag-line coda:

. . . I mean it:
Shimmy like my sister Kate!

Roaring for more when she repeated it yet again:

. . . hear me talking:
Shimmy like my sister Kate!

When she turned to the band with outflung arms and stomped in the fourth with the traditional *One more time . . .*, he rose to his feet, shouting. He had heard that Princey Hartz featured a strip. Even so, he was

taken by surprise by what happened next. She swung back to blow kisses at the wildly applauding audience, bowed—"I say!" crowed the Englishman at the next table. "You can see right down to her jolly old tum!"—and then swung off. Only (there must have been a fastener above the slit in the dress) somewhere in between she had gotten naked! One moment she was standing there in green satin; the next, with a flash of sequined G-string between sculptured thighs, a bounce of breasts with star-covered nipples, she was gone. The dress appeared to hang empty for an instant in the lime, and then as the stamping and whistles crashed out it fell to the floor in an iridescent pool. It was the slickest thing Mettner had ever seen. The hell with Clara Bow, he thought: this kid has It!

The Pack of Aces were blowing a mean, growling riff in slow-drag tempo. Princey undulated back into the spot in fringed, skin-tight black leather, thoughtfully running the thongs of a miniature bullwhip through her red-nailed fingers as she sang them the saga of hard-hearted Hannah, the vamp from Savannah who was the meanest girl in town. The room was electric with tension. Every woman in the place identified with her; every man was raring to tear off that black dress and show her who was really the boss.

Oh, leather it's tough, but Hannah's heart is tougher:
She's the gal who likes to see men suffer.

To tease 'em and thrill 'em, to torture and kill 'em,
is her delight, they say.

She's hard-hearted Hannah, the vamp from Savannah,
GA . . .

Mettner didn't see the three men who walked in through the artists' entrance and made their way to the bar. The first indication he or anyone else had that something was wrong was the sound of gunfire—six shots shattered out over the blare of Princey's finale.

There was a hoarse shout—of outrage? of surprise? of fear?—and a single woman's scream from the back of the room that was swamped in the tinkling clatter of breaking glass. Before the applause could give way to the pandemonium of panic and fear, the three men were away.

One made a detour past the stage (Princey had disappeared) and spoke to the leader out of the corner of his mouth. Another brushed past the table next to Mettner's and knocked one of the blondes' purses to the floor. 'Hey—watch out where you're goin', you big ape!' the girl cried drunkenly. The hood stopped in mid-stride and turned around to stare at her—a burly, red-faced young man in a brown chalk-stripe suit. He bent down and picked up the purse and hung it over the back of her chair by its strap. 'Sorry, lady,' he said, stuffing a smoking revolver into a shoulder holster, 'it could'a been worse, you know!'

'Ah, kiss my ass!' the blonde snapped before her companions could shut her up. But by that time the gangsters had gone.

Mettner was on his feet, pushing his way through the milling, shouting crowd toward the bar. The bartender lay on his back behind the counter among the shivered fragments of bottles, tumblers and glass shelves into which he had been hurled by the impact of the slugs. Liquor from a cracked Bourbon quart still inverted in its dispense cradle splashed down into his open eyes, and diluted the blood soaking the front of his white jacket. The heady scent of alcohol cut through the cordite fumes and cigar smoke over the bar.

The band was playing something loud and fast that was obviously the intro to the girls' next number, for they trooped on like puppets pulled by a single string and started uncertainly to chant the first line of 'Mamma Goes Where Papa Goes'.

'Papa done gone already!' someone shouted—and in the burst of semi-hysterical laughter triggered off by

this, Mike Rogolino, the manager of the Persimmon, leaped up on to the stage and waved the Pack of Aces to silence.

'It's ok, everybody! It's ok,' he yelled. 'All over now! The hoods have scrambled. Just get back to your tables and carry on drinking. The police have been called . . .'

The rest of his words were lost in the stampede for the exit. Mettner heard the monocled Englishman exclaim 'By jove! What a topping yarn for the chaps at the club!' before he was swept away in the rush. Then the newspaperman was almost alone in the wilderness of overturned chairs and wreaths of smoke marking the spot where the murdered man lay. By the time the police arrived from the Hanson Street precinct house, half a block away, he was the only client left on the premises.

After the routine questions and the flare of flash powders, after the body had been taken out to the meat wagon, the lieutenant in charge of the detail sat down at Mettner's table. His name was Mulligan and he had been at Austin High with the newspaperman. 'Ok, Jason,' he said, feeding a stick of gum into his mailbox mouth, 'let's have it from you.'

Mettner shrugged and set fire to a cigarette. 'Not much to tell. I didn't see them come in. I was watching the broad. Six shots and then they took a powder. Walked out as calmly as you please—one of them even stopped to pick up some blonde's purse he'd knocked off her table.'

'You get a good view of him?'

'Sure,' Mettner said, the cigarette between his lips jerking up and down as he spoke. 'He was right at the next table. Big, fresh-faced guy around twenty-five, twenty-eight. Curly hair, bright blue eyes. He was wearing a brown suit with a white stripe.'

'Don't they all!' Mulligan said. 'Blond or dark?'

'Kind of chestnut. Unusual with those blue eyes. I think he was Irish: he had a kind of accent—but not like yours.'

Mulligan's father had been an Ulsterman, a non-conformist minister who'd emigrated before the troubles in 1916, and his son still spoke in the guttural tones of Belfast. 'You mean a free-stater?' he asked. 'One of them real mick voices?'

'Yeah, I guess so. Like a brogue. It was real soft. You know?'

'Sure I know,' the lieutenant said. 'Half the punks on the North Side are southerners who couldn't make it back home. Or their old man couldn't. Or something.' It was a sore point with him. O'Mara, the captain in charge of the Hanson Street precinct, was of Dublin stock. Five years after the old country had been partitioned, the political differences which had divided the nation were still being fought out between the two cops in Chicago.

Mulligan swung around in his chair, shifting the wad of gum to the other side of his battered face. He stabbed a finger toward the members of the Persimmon staff who were standing in an uneasy group near the stage. 'You people—who got a good look at the killers?'

It seemed that nobody had. Mike Rogolino had been on the phone in the back room behind the bar. The waiters had all had their backs turned, serving drinks. The stage doorman had been in the john when the hoods passed his cubbyhole. The girls had been changing costumes upstairs.

'For Chrissake,' the lieutenant exploded, 'even if you didn't see 'em come in, surely somebody *looked* after they heard the shots? Or do they knock guys off so often in here that nobody notices any more?'

'It was all kinda confused—and so quick,' Rogolino explained apologetically. 'People was standin' on chairs rootin' for Princey. The place was jammed and the lights were down. Before we realized what had happened, they'd gone.'

'That's great. That's just dandy,' Mulligan said bitterly. 'Three torpedoes force their way in to a room full

of two hundred and fifty people, plug the barman, and walk out. And I get one description of one guy from one man! You . . .' The finger stabbed out again at Princey. 'You were singing. You were facing the room. You musta seen something.'

'I was in a solo lime,' Princey said. 'You can't see anything beyond the light. It's like dazzling.' She had thrown a wool topcoat over the leather dress and her face was pale.

The policeman breathed heavily. He turned on Rusty Sampson. 'I hear tell one of them spoke to you on the way out. Did *you* have your eyes shut?'

The boy shifted nervously from foot to foot. 'He was . . . just a hood,' he said. 'You know. Big. Pale face with those slatey eyes. Tough. Oh, yeah—he was wearing a pearl-gray fedora with a black band.'

'Now ain't that nice,' Mulligan said. 'He was wearin' a gray fedora!' His fist thumped the table. 'Like every other goddam sonofabitch hoodlum in this lousy town!' he roared. 'What the hell are you people tryin' to pull?'

'One of them was a little guy,' a waiter volunteered hastily. 'I didn't see his face, honest I didn't. But he was a little guy.'

'Thank you very much! So now I got one fresh-faced Irishman, one thug in a hat, and a little guy with no face. With eyewitness details like those, we should pull them in inside an hour.'

Nobody laughed. Mulligan dropped the sarcasm and came out of his corner again. 'What'd he say to you?' he barked at Sampson.

'He said to keep right on playing if we didn't want to get hurt,' the young musician replied. 'And you know who kept on playing.'

'Son,' the lieutenant said, 'that ain't even an original line. Jimmy McPartland used it when Capone's boys took apart Eddie Tancil's joint a year ago. Now come on: how did those creeps get in here? Don't you keep your stage door locked?'

'Sure we do,' Rogolino offered. 'It's locked all the time. Ain't nobody got keys but the guys and gals work here.'

Mulligan unwrapped another stick of gum and mailed it in his mouth. 'OK,' he said mildly. 'So let's see those keys, huh? All of you . . . I wanna see your pass keys on this table.'

Rogolino's was in the office. Some of the girls had to go back upstairs to fetch their purses. One of the waiters thought he'd lost his, and then found it in his hip pocket. But finally everybody produced a key and laid it down in front of the lieutenant. Everybody but Princey Hartz.

Mulligan looked at her. 'Well?'

'I guess I must have given it to one of my gentleman friends,' Princey said throatily. 'I was . . . well, I kinda hung one on last night. I don't exactly recall . . . I mean so's he could come up and see me between shows. You know how it is, Lieutenant.'

'Yeah,' the policeman drawled. 'I know exactly how it is. Your boyfriend's a punk called Pat Mullooney, ain't that right? Fresh-faced, curly-haired mick, carries a heater for Teddy McGrath, right?'

She stared out at him through the back mascara bars. 'Why, Lieutenant—I don't know what you're talking about. I never heard of the guy. Leastways not under that name. But then I got a lot of gentleman friends.'

'I'll bet!' Mulligan snorted. He rose abruptly to his feet and called over to the bulls still busy around the bar: 'Get these people's depositions. Check their names and addresses. We may want them as material witnesses. Then report back to me at the precinct house. I'm going on out and get me a lungful of fresh air!'

Ten minutes later he was moodily stirring sugar into a cup of coffee in an all-night drugstore across the street from the station house. Mettner sat on the other side of the booth with an untouched soda by his elbow. 'What's the score, Howie?' the newspaperman asked. 'You got any leads on the killing?'

'Shit, I don't need any leads,' Mulligan growled. 'I can write you a prescription for the whole deal right now.'

Mettner was leaning against the partition, his head twisted to one side and his right eye squinted against the smoke curling up from the cigarette in his mouth. 'I'm listening,' he said.

'Usual story. That dump's in Teddy McGrath's territory. They get their liquor from him. The guy they killed—Briggs, Artie Briggs, he was called—was a small-time chiseler. My guess is he tried to muscle in on the deal, maybe move in some hooch of his own or even push drugs to the customers. They warned him off and he wouldn't play ball . . . so they rubbed him out. It's as simple as that.'

'So the hoods were McGrath's strong-arm men?'

'Sure they were. You know it and I know it—and every single sonofabitch in that goddam bar knew it. But do you think I could make it stick? Do you think I could get one positive identification outa the lot of them? My ass I could! They're far too scared to talk.'

'I could pick out the one I saw,' Mettner offered. 'Mahoney, was it?'

'Mullowney. The stripper's lay. Appreciate the offer, Jason, but what good would it do? I know goddam well that he coned the girl into giving him her key, but what proof do I have? They could have taken an impression of any of them keys. Ah, what's the use . . .' Mulligan pushed his hat to the back of his head and mashed his corrugated forehead between fingers and thumb.

'If I did get positive identification of all three of the bastards, I'd be taken off the case tomorrow and told to keep my nose clean or else. The Persimmon's covered. McGrath's covered. O'Mara takes his orders like every other police captain in this stinking city. The whole place is sewn up tight as a lousy drum.'

'But if the law . . . ?'

'Don't talk to me about the law,' the lieutenant choked. 'If the law meant anything in this town, I'd

have Rogolino inside for selling liquor and every goddam client in that dump behind bars for drinking it! If the law meant anything, hoods who bumped guys off would go to the electric chair. Do you know how many gang murders there've been in Chicago in the last two years? One hundred and thirty-eight! Do you know how many arrests have been made—'

'Don't tell me,' Mettner interrupted. 'Six. I read the files too.'

'Yeah—six out of a hundred and thirty-eight. Not bad, huh? That's one out of twenty-three, just over four per cent. Except five of those six were acquitted, so help me, and the sixth was only sent up because he actually shot the guy in court! They couldn't talk their way outa that one. But this one tonight they could. You know what would happen if I took up your offer and booked Mul-lowney?'

'Sure. They'd slap a writ of *habeas corpus* on you, and—'

'McGrath's mouthpiece would spring him in less than an hour,' the lieutenant cut in. 'Right. And if I tried for an indictment, relying on your identification, there'd be eight witnesses of unimpeachable goddam respectability who'd swear he'd been playing pinochle with his grandma over in Des Plaines all evening. If I still went after him, I'd get fired.'

'So why don't you quit?' Mettner asked.

'I have to live, bud.' Mulligan's Ulster ancestry became more pronounced when he was angry. 'And I'm thinking it may be worth my while waiting. Right now there's kind of a truce between the two main gang factions—Capone and the Syndicate boys on the South Side, and the Irish and the Jews who control the North. But one day some little shindig like the one you just saw will set 'em at each other's throats again. And then I'm hoping the whole deal will bust wide open: the bastards'll claw each other to death!'

The newspaperman grinned. 'So what action do you take on tonight's . . . little shindig?'

'I file a report,' Mulligan said tightly. 'Which will get shelved or put in the no action tray like all the others. But I also send a carbon privately to a buddy of mine in Washington . . . the way I always do.'

Two

It was in 1910 that the legendary Chicago vice king Big Jim Colosimo hired a New York gunman named Johnny Torrio to protect him from Black Hand extortionists of the mafia. Ten years later the Eighteenth Amendment to the US Constitution, popularly known as the Volstead Act, came into force: Uncle Sam went teetotal overnight. And Torrio, organized crime's first mastermind, saw the pickings to be had through prohibition. He hired Frankie Uale, the mafia chief himself, to eliminate his boss and set about the creation of his own illegal empire. With the help of Capone he bought up now worthless breweries, tempted thousands of ordinary citizens to set up secret backyard stills, and established a chain of speakeasies, gambling houses, brothels and saloons in which to sell the products. Since the majority of Americans were unwilling to forgo their liquor—law or no goddam law—there were of course rivals. After an uneasy truce, with the city divided between them, the mafia-backed Sicilian-Italian syndicate run by Torrio and Capone found itself opposed by a tough Irish-Jewish confederacy led by the Dion O'Banion and Bugs Moran mobs—each faction trying to bribe, beat and blast its way to the top. That was when the gang wars in Chicago really started.

The carbon copy of Lieutenant Howard Mulligan's report on the Persimmon killing ended up, with a dozen others,

on a spike on a desk in Washington. After two weeks the reports were lifted and transferred to a box file in another office. From there they were taken to a different building and added to a stack of newspaper clippings, depositions, summaries and similar reports. A statistician prepared a digest of all this material which was sent by special messenger to the office of US Attorney General Emmerson Q. Johnson. There were three conferences at the White House. And then the whole bulky dossier, along with the minutes of these meetings, found its way on to the desk of a man named George Stevens. Clipped to the cover of the folder was a sheet of White House writing paper on which in a presidential scrawl were the words: *Handle this any way you want—but handle it good!*

Stevens was a man as anonymous as his name—middle-aged, of middle height, an administration lawyer in a mid-gray suit whose face sometimes even his friends failed to recognize in a crowd. His one distinguishing trait was his passion for the law as an absolute. To George Stevens the end justified the means . . . just so long as that end was the preservation of the law. He did not concern himself with value judgments on the rightness or wrongness, the equity or practicality of the law; only with its just administration once it had been voted in. He was therefore in a non-political sense a democrat, a man who put the benefit of the majority above the welfare of the individual. Unmoved by personal or political considerations, he enforced the prohibition law not because he disapproved of drinking, not because he considered alcohol a menace, not even because he was a loyal party man, but because it had been passed by a two-thirds majority of the Senate in 1917 and ratified later the same year by the House of Representatives.

But although Stevens idolized the law as an abstract, his methods of enforcing it were practical and concrete. In this one respect he was a rugged individualist, un-

afraid to cut corners and go out on a limb—just so long as the end-products satisfied his own criteria of justice and right.

He spent a whole morning studying the presidential dossier passed to him through the Attorney General's office. Then he called for a number of reports from his own staff.

A week later he sat at his desk reading a single sheet of manuscript in a plain buff folder. The paper was a résumé of five days' intensive investigation and screening by the FBI, and the man whose life it encapsulated had been chosen by Stevens from a short-list of twenty he had considered. For the third time he read:

BRUNO FARRELL—born 1891 Denver, Colorado, of third generation American parents. Father consultant ophthalmologist at Denver General; mother (née Lilian Hirschfeld) ward sister before marriage. Both dead. Left local high-school before graduation to work passage to Europe on US freighter sailing from Galveston, Texas. Subsequently (1910-14) soldier of fortune living on sailboat between Italy and Sicily. Suspected smuggler and gun-runner but no convictions. At outbreak of hostilities 1914, traveled to London and volunteered services British Expeditionary Force. Awarded Military Medal, Ypres. Later commissioned as pilot in Royal Flying Corps with many combat missions over western front. Transferred to US army in 1917 and seconded to Intelligence because of intimate knowledge Italy and Italians. Distinguished himself Caporetto. Since armistice, like many veteran ex-officers without special qualifications, has worked for US government. Presently employed as Federal prohibition agent, Massachusetts (salary: \$85 pw). Record of arrests and convictions; average.

Personal notes: perhaps because of Italian blood on father's side (the name was originally Faroli), Farrell

has latin-type features. Speaks fluent idiomatic Italian and could easily be taken for native of Palermo or Naples. Unmarried. Reputation as womanizer but not to detriment of duties. Lives within income and has been known to refuse bribes on three occasions from criminals subsequently convicted on Farrell's testimony. No gambling history. Interests: sailboats, flying, automobiles.

Beneath the typescript, a high official of the FBI had added in his own handwriting: 'George—this guy is a tough egg and something of a law unto himself. But he knows how to take orders . . . and how to give them! Best of all from your point of view, he is, so far as we can find out, dead straight.'

Stevens closed the folder. He took off his glasses and polished them on a white silk handkerchief from the breast pocket of his gray jacket. Then he banged the bell on his desk and said to the stenographer who answered the summons: 'Please have Mr. Farrell come in now.'

The man who entered a moment later was lean but compactly built, muscular without being stocky. He was about five ten and 160 pounds. His face was oval, his skin slightly sallow, his eyes wide and dark under well-defined brows. With his black hair brilliantined close to his head, he had a slight resemblance to the movie actor Ramon Novarro. He was wearing a tan gabardine three-piece with a cream silk shirt and a tie striped in orange and black. There was a straw hat with a black band in his strong, well-kept hand.

The lawyer took in the details and noted the stubborn, slightly cruel mouth with a practiced eye. 'Sit down, Farrell,' he said without preamble, waving to a chair in front of his desk. 'I guess you're trying to figure out why you've been brought all the way from Massachusetts to Washington?'

'Yes, sir,' Farrell replied, hitching up his pants and

lowering himself into the chair. 'It's . . . not quite the usual run of duty.' His voice was a light tenor—somehow surprising in a man so dark.

'I have a job to offer you,' Stevens said. 'A special job. It'd mean a raise to one twenty-five a week . . . but you're not obliged to take it, because it could be rough and there's an element of risk in it.'

Farrell crossed his legs and balanced the straw hat on one knee. He leaned back in the chair and cleared his throat. 'Well, of course a guy's always interested in more dough,' he said. 'If you could maybe tell me a little more . . . ?'

Stevens rested his elbows on the desk, steepled his fingers, and looked out the window at the tree-shaded lawns around the Capitol. 'I'm not offering it to you because you have a particularly brilliant record in the service,' he went on. 'You don't have—but it'll pass. I'm offering it to you because you're the only man on the books to have the four precise qualifications I need. Number one, you're physically tough. Number two, you speak Italian. Number three, so far as looks go you could *be* Italian.'

Farrell raised his thick eyebrows. 'And the fourth . . . ?'

'Number four, according to the inquiries I've made, you can be trusted—and that's the most important of all.'

The prohibition agent visibly relaxed. He shifted his position in the chair and unbuttoned his jacket. 'Would you mind if I smoked, sir?' he asked.

'No, no. Of course not. Here—have one of these.' Stevens pushed a silver box across and thumbed the wheel of a desk lighter as Farrell helped himself. 'Before I outline the job, I have to wise you up some on the background. What do you know about the enforcement of the act in Chicago?'

The agent dragged smoke into his lungs and smiled. 'Only what the boys on my beat say—that it's something

of a laugh. I mean like as far as enforcement goes, it's a minus quantity.'

'You can say that again!' The lawyer reached for a folder on his 'in' tray, flipping through the sheets it contained. 'I don't know where to begin,' he said. 'Let me just tell you that in the state of Illinois, law and order has completely broken down. But totally. The hoodlums run the city any way they want. When prohibition came in, the Thompson administration in Chicago was wet to a man: they just ignored the law and allowed the bootleggers to take over. William E. Dever ran for mayor in twenty-three and was elected on a clean-up-the-city ticket. But it was already too late: there were sixteen gang killings in the first year of his term, forty-six in the second, and seventy-six in the third—with not one damned conviction among them! I tell you, it's anarchy in that burg!'

He gestured toward a row of filing cabinets by the door. 'I have a stack of newspaper clippings a foot high in there,' he said, 'every one quoting some police chief or city councillor saying that the gangster stories are exaggerated, that the law is being respected. Jesus! . . .' He was becoming perceptibly more human as indignation swept through him. 'You only have to spend one hour there! Sure, there are speakeasies all over. Everyone knows that. But even in New York they're blind pigs—they're hidden behind some innocent front or you have to knock on a door with a spyhole. In Chicago they're wide open: the saloons and sporting houses carry on in open defiance of the law; no difference from the way they were run before the act!'

Farrell jettied smoke through his nostrils. 'Why Chicago?' he asked.

'Complicated reasons. Huge immigrant population for one. The city has a population of 3 million . . .' Stevens riffled through the folder and removed a sheet of paper. 'This is from an editorial in the *Chicago Tribune*,' he

said, settling his spectacles back on his nose. '“Mayor Dever's 7,000 policemen face a city which rejects the law they try to enforce . . . Half a million people in Chicago whose mother tongue was German nearly all have a profound conviction against the prohibition of beer. Not one per cent of the 166,500 whose mother tongue was Italian or Greek can believe that wine is morally bad or can be made bad by law.” Add to that our American admiration for the self-made man, the go-getter, and you'll see why the people there look on these bums as some kind of goddam folk heroes! I mean things could never have gotten to this state if the people were not, through greed or selfishness or some kind of misplaced enthusiasm, on the side of the lawbreakers. But I'm not concerned with how people look at the law. My business is its enforcement.'

There was an ornate ashtray on the desk fashioned into a model of Manhattan skyscrapers. Farrell leaned forward and mashed out his cigarette in the East River. 'And those cops,' he said. 'Do they try and enforce the law?'

'Oh, sure,' Stevens snorted. 'They arrest drunks and drivers and saloon keepers who won't pay hush money.' He took another sheet of paper from the folder. 'Drunken driving convictions,' he read, 'are up by 467 percent on last year, prosecutions for selling liquor resulting in the death of the consumer, 600 percent. There were 16,000 more arrests for drunkenness in that one city last year than there were in the whole of England and Wales, with a population of forty million! But they don't arrest gang slayers, or bootleggers, or crooked politicians, or cops who take bribes. Not a single important gangster has ever been sent up by the city or state legal authorities: the few that have gone inside have been put there by Federal action.'

'Jesus,' Farrell muttered. 'I didn't know it was that bad.'

'Bad? This guy Capone calls up the judges from his

office at the Metropole and tells them—tells them!—what verdicts to bring in! He pays out \$30,000 a week in bribes, mostly to the police! If I tell you that he has sixty percent of the Chicago cops in his pocket, that's not to say that there are forty percent of honest policemen in the city: they're just the ones being paid by the mobs on the other side. Three hundred and ninety prohibition agents have already been fired for dishonesty. We just can't afford to pay them what the gangsters pay. If you want to find a straight law enforcement officer in Chicago, look in the breadline—or at the morgue.'

Farrell whistled soundlessly. 'Can't the Feds take over?'

The lawyer spread his hands in a gesture of defeat. 'It's delicate,' he said. 'These people have been elected by democratic vote. We don't have too much right to bust in and clean up a state matter. The internal revenue boys are working on a scheme to nab the mobsters for tax evasion, but they're not ready to act yet. In the meantime, something has got to be done. The gang rule in Chicago has to be broken.'

The prohibition agent grinned suddenly. 'What had you in mind, sir?'

'We've come up with a wildcat scheme,' Stevens said. 'No good trying to break them by the ordinary process of law enforcement: the city's already shown it won't wear that. OK, desperate situations call for desperate remedies. We decided the job will have to be done from the inside.'

'From the . . . inside?' Farrell was leaning forward again, his usually bland face alive with interest.

'That's it. Right now there's a truce between the two rival sets of gangs. They've partitioned the city between them. So on the surface—apart from an occasional killing when someone steps out of line—it's all quiet. The rottenness and graft are underground. But if that truce was to be broken . . .' Stevens paused for effect and then went on: 'If the mobsters were set at each other's throats

again, if the citizens dare not go out on the street for fear of getting cut down by a Thompson—why then, if the position deteriorated enough, we might have the excuse we need to step in.'

'You mean like it has to get worse before it can get better?'

'Exactly.' Stevens snatched off his glasses and darted a piercing look at his visitor. 'Your mother's name was Hirschfeld, wasn't it?' he said unexpectedly. 'A German family, I guess. How come you went to England and offered your services to the British at the beginning of the war?'

Farrell shrugged. 'That's where the action was,' he said.

The lawyer nodded approvingly. 'That's what I wanted to hear you say. Well, there's plenty of action in this job I have for you—if you want to take it.'

The sallow, goodlooking face stared at him expectantly, dark brows raised.

'You look Italian,' Stevens said. 'You speak Italian. You could *be* Italian . . . and you know Sicily as well. If your clothes were a mite more jazzy, maybe with a pencil-line mustache on that upper lip, you could almost pass for one of those mafia characters. And that's exactly what I want you to do, Farrell. I want you to go to Chicago and get yourself recruited by one of the Sicilian-American gangs controlled by Capone . . .'

Farrell burst out laughing. 'I get what you mean—"there's an element of risk",' he quoted.

'It's not as difficult as you might think,' the man behind the desk said. 'We'll fix you up with an unshakable cover, of course—lodge you in jail with a record as long as your arm, allow you to make a jail-break. After that you're on your own. You make your way to Chicago and establish a reputation as a ruthless hood . . . then sit back and wait. Sooner or later someone's going to ask you to team up with them.'

'Or rub me out!'

'Not if you're good. If you're good they'll want to recruit you.'

'And after that?'

'After that you play it by ear. But your assignment is to mix it. The first thing you have to do is engineer a breakdown of this truce arrangement—whatever way you think best. The details are up to you.'

'Who's my contact in Chicago?' Farrell asked.

'You don't have one. You don't have a contact anywhere. Can't afford to take the risk—because if one man knows your true identity, that man can talk and you'll be blown. We don't know how high up the rottenness goes, so it's best not to take chances.'

'Yeah, I see the point, but . . .'

'Look,' Stevens said. 'There's nobody we can trust in Chicago. Nobody. This plan of ours to break up the gangs from the inside is without the knowledge of the city police, the state police, or the civil authority. For your own good, it's best that your identity remains a total secret. But total. My superiors know what I'm doing . . . but only in principle. Nobody but me will know the name of the guy in the field. You'll be on no file, in no dossier, in this building or anywhere else in Washington. Officially, the cover you adopt will not exist.'

'Meet Mister Nobody!' Farrell said with a crooked smile.

'Right. And from your end, there's nobody you're to contact except me—in person. I'll give you an unlisted number to call at certain hours. And while we're on this kick—when I say you're on your own I mean just that. If you're picked up by the Chicago cops and jailed, nobody will get you out; if you're in a tight corner, don't expect any last minute rescue.'

'How do I stand with the law?' Farrell asked. 'I mean if I play it the way you suggest and get recruited, I'll be

required to commit unlawful acts—bank hold-ups maybe, beatings, gang killings, that kind of jazz. How about that?"

Stevens tilted back his swivel chair and joined the tips of his fingers. "The law is greater than the individual," he said sententiously. "In such a case, my formal instruction to you is to do anything necessary to avoid your cover being blown. You'll have to suppress your own conscience for the greater good."

"OK. But would I have to take the rap?"

The lawyer permitted himself a wintry smile. "In the rare event that you were indicted," he said, "I'm sure something could be arranged. Especially in Chicago."

Farrell looked at the ceiling and thought for a moment. "I'd need dough," he said. "Lots of it, if I was to put up a convincing front."

"You'd have it. Though I must warn you I'd expect you to account for every dollar, in a monthly report mailed to my private address. Your pay would be banked for you automatically while you were on assignment. One twenty-five a week. Now tell me—will you take the job, or not?"

The prohibition agent reached inside his jacket for his cigarette case. "Oh, sure," he said. "I'll take it."

Six hours later, when the office staff had gone home, Farrell was driven away from the building in a closed car, heading for an unknown destination. His cover had been agreed. There had been a daring one-man hold-up at the New York diamond exchange on West 47th Street nine months previously, and the robber had never been caught. Farrell would make his jail transfer, tagged as the author of that lone-wolf heist.

He was to use the original name of his father's family: Faroli. That way, Stevens said, there'd be a solid background to be discovered if anyone did attempt to track back on him. As for his real identity, that would be taken care of too. Colleagues in Massachusetts would be told that Bruno Farrell had been called to

Washington for a special course on prohibition enforcement.

'Once you're out of jail,' Stevens said, 'you'll have no further contact with me until you hit Chicago. After that, I'll watch for results—but don't call me more often than you need. *How* you get there, I'll leave to you. You can either work out your own jail-break or make yourself a reputation and get invited to join some other guys'. While you're inside, you'll have one visitor a week—me. That way you can wise me up when you're about to go over the wall.'

'Just so long as it's a one-way ticket,' Farrell said.

Three

Those Feds didn't know what had hit 'em when the people in the Windy City turned thumbs down on prohibition. They went plumb crazy, tried to enforce the law with a heavy hand. You know, like put the boot in. Some law! There was a guy up in Michigan called Fred Palm got life, just because they found him with a pint of gin in his pants pocket. A woman who lived near the Great Lakes, a mother of ten kids, was sent up for ten years because they found a jug of moonshine layin' in her dresser drawer. And in Chicago alone, the Feds killed twenty-three innocent people in trigger-happy raids. Not a single goddam one of the bastards was punished. At the same time they opened up the jails and let the real hard guys out. Capone bossed a private army of 700 in his heyday—and thirty percent of them were paroled ex-cons! Governor Small's Illinois Pardons Board set free 950 between 1924 and 1927. That was a laugh all right!

The jail-break had taken place 380 miles from New York, and although Guardi flattened the gas pedal of the rented Duesenburg every time they hit a freeway, it was almost seven hours before he was able to dump the men at the neighborhood drugstore on the outskirts of the city where their contact was to meet them. By that time two of the screws wounded in the battle inside the penitentiary were on the danger list, and every news-

paper and radio station in the East was carrying descriptions of the fugitives.

The break had been Flash Butcher's idea. Flash was a junkie, a long-time mainliner whose love affair with the Big H dated from the fourth grade. But the deal blew up in his face one night in Dayton, Ohio, when Flash shot himself a fix he'd gotten from a new pusher who wasn't wise to the fact that Mrs. Butcher's boy took his horse with a fifty percent cut. Flash syringed a double-strength dose of instant heaven into his median cephalic vein, three-sixteenths of an inch away from the left sigmoid cavity, unaware that it was a one-way passport to oblivion. He could have ended up in the city morgue as just one more unexplained OD, if it hadn't been for the fact that he was turning over a jeweler's strongroom at the time. The Holmes men found him lying there and called the cops. They patched him up and gave him the cold turkey treatment; and when his hands had stopped shaking enough for him to grip the edge of the dock, they sent him up the river for a rest cure. A week after he had been discharged from the prison infirmary, he was planning the break.

For although Flash Butcher knew more about gems than the executive committee of the Amsterdam dealers' institute, although he was a hard man, a ruthless man and a smart one, he had been on the stuff less for the kicks than because it was the only way he knew how to get by. For Flash the Big H was a way of life, as American as clam chowder or the race track at Aqueduct. And Flash was a patriot. For him, then, the equation was simple: if jail equaled Flash minus horse, then jail minus Flash must equal horse . . . So he had to get out.

His determination was strengthened one visitors' day by a message from a broad who was shackled up with an old buddy of his who ran a Syndicate offshoot in the Bronx. She was a big-hipped redhead with too much mascara and sweat patches beneath the arms of her green piqué dress. But to Flash she could have been the

dove making its home run on the final leg of that round trip from the ark. He sat with lowered eyes, staring at the twin peaks of Mount Ararat as they rose and fell with the girl's breathing on the far side of the grille.

'In Philly. It'll be the biggest heist in ten years,' she said urgently. 'But it's a split-second deal—like hit and run. And for this we need someone he should know the merchandise like his own mother's milk. Bennie don't want to bring in the organization: it has to be cut too many ways. So for his money, yours is the card to be marked.'

'Sure,' Flash said. 'Except like I happen to be in jail. And jail happens to be four hundred miles west of Bennie. You want I should ask for parole and borrow the Governor's caddy?'

'Don't be like that,' the girl said. 'You get over that wall and we'll have transport waiting the motor she's in first already. We can keep you under wraps until we get word they're making this delivery—and after we split you can make for Mexico, the Bahamas . . . anywhere.'

'Great,' Flash murmured. 'You got any ideas about getting over the wall?'

'Ah, c'mon Flash!' the redhead coaxed. 'You're not going to let a little thing like that fox you? A smart guy like you?'

Flash sighed, a rider without his horse. 'I'll let you know,' he said.

'Next week at the latest,' the girl whispered, with a sidelong glance at a warder approaching behind the grille. 'And Flash—fix it so you come out with two, three buddies we can trust. We need muscle to block the opposition.'

'I'll let you know,' Flash said again.

Back in his cell he smashed his fist impotently against the gray wall. If only he could lay his hands on a fix! With liquid fire running in his veins, inspiration would be his for the asking. He could do anything . . . a smart guy like him! But this time it had to be the wrong

way around: the inspiration had to be there before he could unshackle the horse. He slumped on the narrow prison bed and began to think.

The following week he told the girl the deal was on.

He had already chosen the three other members of his team. The big hitter was Angelo, a stocky, droop-eyed boy whose parents had come from Calabria; bitter because this geographical accident ruled him out of the mafia, a killer because he was bitter. Number two was Faroli. He was tough (two fags who'd tried to make him were still in the infirmary with broken jaws), but it was because of his knowledge that Flash wanted him in. If it was true what the grapevine said about that raid he'd pulled on the New York diamond exchange, he could help Flash select the ice and halve the time for the job. Boscoe was the end stop—a lumbering truck driver as powerful as a 300 hp diesel, who'd run booze for the Bugs Moran mob in Chicago. Boscoe's trouble was that he'd drawn a short straw when they lined up for the intelligence issue, and he spent more time inside than out, which was tough because he fancied himself as a ladies' man. Not always a successful one, however, for the crime which had sent him to the pen for this stretch was rape. Angelo's ticket was equally at odds with his reputation. Although the law knew perfectly well that he had killed more than once and would kill again, they could find no witnesses spunky enough to testify and all they could hang on him was a tax-evasion rap. Faroli was a loner: it seemed the 47th Street heist was the first time he'd been nailed. Flash Butcher was well enough pleased with the team just the same. Each was a hard man in his way, each was bitter—and each was fired with the determination to get out, no matter what they had to do to make it. With men such as these, he might even make it himself!

They wouldn't have stood a chance, though, if Flash hadn't happened to hear of an existing escape plan one day in the prison laundry. With Boscoe's help, he beat

the details of the plan out of the punk who'd dreamed it up—some IWW organizer who was in for sedition—while Angelo and Faroli kept watch at each end of the corridor. Angelo was only tough when there was a gun in his hand and six inches of steel tucked into the waistband of his pants, and Faroli was still an unknown quantity.

Boscoe laid the wobbly out cold with a single left-hander. When he came to, he had his wrists screwed up between his shoulder blades and his feet trapped in an agonizing leg-lock. Flash unbuttoned the punk's fly and started to put the questions. Before he talked, the kid puked twice and got himself a busted gut into the bargain. But aside from a swelling at one side of his jaw, there wasn't a mark on him. Flash and Boscoe were quite proud.

Next in line was to put out of action the three other guys in on the punk's deal. Leaving the weakest to Angelo and posting Faroli as lookout, they took one each and beat the shit out of them on the morning of visitors' day. That way they made sure Flash could pass on the message to Bennie's redhead before the guys recovered consciousness and grassed on them.

There was to be no attempt, you see, to scare the victims into silence: Flash and his team *wanted* to be identified as the aggressors; their whole plan depended on it. They would then be hauled off, after the message had been passed on, to the local courtroom and accused before a judge, so that their sentences could be increased. Then they would be confined to the punishment block, or whatever. And, of course, the screws would be taking special precautions in case they tried to make a break between the penitentiary and the courthouse.

This was where Flash got smart. They would make that break actually on their way out of the jail, as they crossed the exercise yard, which was flanked by the only wall giving direct access to the outer world. It was the obvious place if you were trying for an ordinary break

from the inside—but prisoners on their way to town would be expected to try outside. Seeing Flash and his team pulling this, the prison authorities would credit them with being that smart, but they'd think that was as far as it went. They would take the necessary steps to block this escape attempt from the yard. There would be steps, Flash knew: a whole routine laid out in the rule book. And this was where he showed that he was smart-plus.

For while the screws operated the system to block an exercise-yard break-out, Flash and his buddies would switch to the other plan, the one they'd beaten out of the punk. And the exit signs for this were hung over another part of the jail altogether.

It all depended on four things. Number one, that as soon as an escape attempt was signaled, that part of the jail was automatically sealed off from the rest. Number two, that beyond the kitchens there was a commissary block staffed by outside personnel who took delivery of supplies intended for the cookhouses and prepared them for the prisoner chefs. Number three, that there were garbage chutes leading from the first floor of this block to the ground in back of the penitentiary. And number four, that there would be a key to the door dividing the kitchens from the commissary on the bunch carried by the chief screw for every cell block . . .

Flash's plan was predicated on the assumption that they wouldn't be cuffed until just before they were put aboard the meat wagon taking them to the courthouse. In this he miscalculated: the bracelets were snapped on their wrists even before they left the cells. But there was a compensation: the chief screw was Schultz . . . and Flash hated Schultz more than any man on earth. Because he was the guy with the keys, Schultz was going to get hurt. If he got hurt real bad, that was ok by Flash.

Schultz was tall and red-faced and beefy, with mean little pig's eyes above a rat-trap mouth. With one excep-

tion, according to gossip in the pen, he had been guilty of every crime for which the men under his charge had been sent there. The odd man out was bribery—and the only reason Schultz wouldn't take graft was because if he did, it would take some potential victim out of his clutches and deny him the pleasure of tormenting the bastard. Or that was what they said in the pen.

Flash Butcher hated him not because he was tough, not because he was sadistic, not because he was unjust, not even because he was the orneriest sonofabitch he had ever met. All those things he could accept in a screw. If you wanted to earn your living that way, you had to be a bastard or go under. He hated him because he sneered with it. And if there was one thing that riled Flash above anything else, it was being sneered at.

Schultz was sneering when they came to take them to the courthouse on the morning of the big day. 'On your feet, you lousy bum,' he grated as the handcuffs clicked shut. 'You think you're so goddam tough nobody can stand up to you? OK, we got the toughest judge in the state to listen to your story today. We'll see how tough you smart-assed jerks feel after ninety days in the cooler on punishment diet!'

'Look, Mac,' Flash said wearily, 'would you lay off of me please?'

'Big shot Butcher, the terror of the pen! He's so big he can afford to leave his visiting cards over the little guys he creases. Until it comes time to visit the courthouse—and then he says "please"!'

'Just lay off, will you? Be a good guy and lay off, huh?'

'Good guy?' Schultz roared. 'Mac? Lay off? Say, what the hell is this? Who the fuck d'you punks think you are, for Chrissake?' He swung his nightstick viciously against Flash's upper arm, sending the manacled man sprawling across the cell bed. 'When you talk to me, Butcher, it's sir—and you don't open your lousy mouth unless you're spoken to. You know that.'

'Have it your way,' Flash said, struggling to his feet.

'There ain't no other way!' Schultz shouted. He belted Flash across the kidneys with the stick and sent him down gasping once more. 'Have it your way who, you stinkin' creep?'

Flash's nostrils were pinched and his face was white. His fingernails were digging into his palms. If he lost his temper now, it could bitch up everything. 'Have it your way . . . sir,' he said between his teeth.

Schultz chuckled. 'That's more like it,' he said. 'Big shot!'

Mansell, McKinley and Taft were the three screws assigned to Angelo and the other two members of the team. The eight men came together at the end of the corridor leading to the exercise yard, where they were joined by two warders from the headquarters wing, over the gates on the far side of the yard. Two more stood with carbines by the black maria just inside the gates. Evidently the authorities weren't taking any chances.

Flash gave the signal when they were fifty feet out into the yard. It was no good starting earlier or the men in the watchtower might not see—and it was essential that those screws believed they were going for the wall.

Scarcely pausing in his stride, Boscoe bent to grab Mansell's ankles with his fettered hands. Hauling the warder off his feet, he whirled scything the helpless man's body around his huge shoulders like a human flail. Mansell's cap flew off as his head and shoulders cannoned into the two screws from the gatehouse, knocking them sprawling on the macadam; and then his skull thudded sickeningly against the temple of Taft. Boscoe dropped him senseless on top of his colleagues and turned to help Flash, who had slipped his manacled hands over Schultz's head and shoulders, pinioning the big man as he cursed and struggled across the yard.

Angelo had meanwhile stopped dead in his tracks, bending double to thrust his hands into his fly, left open after the search before they left his cell. The knife blade, stolen from the refectory and honed to a stiletto-sharp

point in the stone quarry, was hidden in a length of bamboo secreted in Angelo's anus to elude the friskers. It was grasped between his clenched hands when he straightened up. McKinley was already standing over him snarling, his fingers reaching for the flap of his revolver holster. As Angelo's laced fingers traveled savagely on upwards, the needle point of the doctored knife blade pierced the underside of the warder's chin, slicing up through the flesh between the two sides of his lower jawbone, transfixing the tongue, and finally spearing through the roof of the mouth to perforate the lower lobes of the brain. McKinley, the two halves of his jaw skewered together by the murderous blade, uttered a strange muffled whinnying as he sagged to the ground. Angelo leaned down again. Placing the heel of one foot against the fallen screw's chin, he seized the remnant of the knife's handle and dragged it free, skipping to one side with a curse as blood pumped out on to the yard through the now unplugged incision. Angelo hated his clients to foul the place up.

Boscoe and Flash, carrying the shouting Schultz between them like a sack of coals, were already racing for the colonnade at one side of the yard, where they would be temporarily out of sight of the guards in the tower. The siren was screaming. The first two screws knocked down by Mansell were scrambling to their feet. The men by the truck were on their way across, unslinging their carbines as they ran. At any moment the yard could be swept by a hail of lead, but nobody dared fire yet for fear of hitting Schultz.

Flash knew the routine. As soon as they saw signs of a break, the watchtower men had orders to seal off that part of the pen, isolate it from the rest of the jail. Thinking this was a yard break, they would be putting that plan into operation now. This suited Flash fine: it would seal the pursuit *into* the yard while he switched to the other plan.

Followed closely by Angelo, he and Boscoe clattered

under the colonnade just as the steel door protecting that corner of the yard was slamming across to block off the corridor leading to cell block D. Faroli was already behind one of the pillars. Using Schultz's body like a battering ram, they hurled themselves toward the closing gap and thrust his head and shoulders through an instant before the door clanged home. Schultz yelled as the heavy metal edge, propelled by electrically operated hydraulic pistons, thudded into his flesh, pinning him inextricably against the steel jamb on the other side of the opening.

The four men ran up the imprisoned warder's back, squeezed through the gap, and dropped to the floor on the inside of the corridor. Until the prison authorities realized that the yard was not in fact the center of an escape attempt, they would be safe from pursuit by other screws—and those on the far side of the door would hardly shoot while Schultz was jammed in it.

The chief warder was wedged face down in the gap, his breath laboring and his face scarlet. They could see the veins on his neck and forehead swelling as the pressure of the pistons forced the heavy door remorselessly against him. Angelo seized one of his flailing hands and jerked the arm straight. Locked around the beefy wrist was a steel circlet carrying the keys they needed. The boy nodded, wiping the bloodstained blade of his knife on Schultz's sleeve.

'Man, it'll take you an hour to pick the lock with that thing!' Boscoe panted.

'I don't aim to pick no lock,' Angelo said. 'It's easier to cut off his hand.'

Schultz's contorted face jerked upward. 'No!' he shouted. 'Christ, you can't! Please!'

'Jesus!' Faroli said. 'Surely you can't . . . ? Flash . . . ?'

'Shaddup!' Butcher growled. 'Leave it to the kid.'

Angelo put one foot against the steel door and hauled on the warder's arm until it was bowstring taut. Schultz screamed as the blade bit into his flesh. 'It ain't . . . all

that difficult,' Angelo said, standing fastidiously to one side as he probed and sawed. 'A guy knows... his anatomy... he can—Ah!—he can kinda *slide* around the joints... without actually havin' to cut *through* anythin'. It's like separatin' the thigh from the drumstick... of a chicken... There! You see!'

He stepped back as the heavy steel circlet with its keys clanged to the cement floor along with the bloody carcass of the warder's hand.

Schultz's frenzied threshing had shifted his body, turning it sideways in the gap as the inexorable pressure forced the door still further shut. Over the incoherent babbling of his voice they could hear the creak of collapsing ribs. From outside in the yard, someone shouted orders... then the whistling crack of carbines and the thunderous reverberation of slugs splatting against the steel barrier. Above their heads, chips flew from the corridor wall as several well-aimed shots passed through the closing gap between the edge of the door and the groove into which it was designed to home.

Flash was grinning like a maniac. He flattened himself against the door, thrust his arm through the aperture, and loosed off four rounds from the revolver he had taken from Schultz on the way across the yard. Then he leaned down and stared into the bloodshot eyes bulging from the chief screw's suffused face. 'So long,' he exulted. 'Big shot!'

Schultz's severed hand lay in a huge splash of blood marking the floor and spattered across the opposite wall. Flash bent to pick up the keys and jerked his head for the others to follow him as he raced for the kitchens.

The two screws supervising the trusties at work were taken completely by surprise as they burst through the door. Boscoe and Angelo seized the wooden handles of a ten-gallon cauldron of boiling soup and hurled the contents in their faces before they could go for their guns. They were still howling when Flash found the right key and let them out into the commissary.

Seeing the gun in his hand, none of the outside personnel made a move to stop them as they headed for the garbage chutes; and seconds later, they were landing on a pile of stinking refuse at the back of the jail. Bennie's minder, Joe Guardi, was waiting in the Duesenburg with the motor running, as the redhead had promised. They unlocked the cuffs on the way.

The girl herself met them at the drugstore rendezvous outside New York. 'Jesus!' she cried. 'Are you boys hot! It seems two of those screws are like to croak, and the whole world wants your heads!'

'Faroli here has his own hideout—but you said you could keep the rest of us under cover,' Flash reminded her.

'Yeah, we can. And you should be smart enough to stay there until Bennie gets word the consignment's due for delivery in Philly.' She turned to Bruno Farrell. 'You got a number we can call to make a date for the pick-up?'

He wrote down a number supplied to him by George Stevens and passed her the slip of paper. Flash Butcher, Boscoe and Angelo—probably Bennie, Guardi and the redhead too—were going to be inside again long before the consignment of gems they hoped to steal in Philadelphia was delivered, for Stevens had been wised up on every step of the plan. Remembering Schultz's hand, Farrell didn't feel too bad about that.

Ten minutes later he left them and walked, feeling oddly unreal in the clothes the girl had brought him, to the garage where the lawyer had left the car he was to use. It was a yellow and black Hispano-Suiza cabriolet with a hood as long as the Staten Island pier. Behind the mahogany door of the glove compartment was a sealed envelope containing the keys, ID papers, and \$2,000 in tens, twenties and fifties.

Farrell climbed behind the huge wheel, pumped the ki-gas, moved the ignition lever to *advance*, and drove the big auto westward out of the city.

Four

They had themselves a kind of code, those guys. Nobody squawked, nobody ever squealed to the law. I guess it all began with that 'Omerta' jazz, the law of silence hung on Sicilians by the mafia. No Unione Siciliana man ever admitted to the cops or in court that the mafia even existed—it was a kids' fairy tale, a newspaper fake-up, a legend from the old country, they had never heard of it. You know why? Because they got rules in that brotherhood. And the two most important are that you must never call on the law when your ass is in a sling, and you must never let on that you heard tell of the mafia or give out the name of another member. Break one of those rules and Jack, you're dead! No, them Sicilians didn't talk. So neither did the Jews and the Irish on the other side. When they caught up with Johnny Torrio and gunned him down in front of his own house after a shopping expedition with his old lady, all he would say was: 'I know who they are. It's my business.' Vincent The Schemer Drucci was ambushed in downtown Chicago with Hymie Weiss by a car full of Capone torpedoes. Cops broke up the gunfight and caught Drucci and Louis Barko, one of the hoods from the car. 'Never saw him before,' the Schemer said. 'It wasn't no gang fight. It was a stick-up, that's all. They were after my roll.' A month later Barko repaid the compliment. He stopped a slug in the shoulder when eleven carloads of North Siders

machine-gunned Capone's Cicero headquarters. Barko had actually been on the sidewalk, watched the whole thing, but when the police lined up Weiss and the others in the precinct house, he said: 'I never saw them before.' Six members of the Bugs Moran mob were machine-gunned to death in the St. Valentine's Day massacre. They dragged Frank Gusenberg out still alive—with fourteen slugs in him. The cops asked him the usual question. 'Nobody shot me,' Frank said just before he croaked.

Bruno Farrell checked in at the Anton Hotel, in the forty-eight hundred block of West 22nd Street, just outside the Chicago city limits in the suburb of Cicero. This would be as good a place as any to start, he figured. Cicero was owned and run lock, stock and barrel by the Capone organization. They operated 160 speakeasies and saloons, wide open day and night, put 5,000 whores into roadhouses, gambling joints and fifty-girl cathouses, and stood over voters with drawn guns at elections to keep Mayor Klenha in City Hall. Capone himself was reckoned to draw \$100,000 a week out of the suburb to add to his \$35 million annual profit.

From the window of Farrell's hotel room, it looked like any suburban main stem . . . a double-track street-car line running down the center of a wide roadway flanked by two- and three-story buildings: a red brick garage, a florist's, the Pinkert State Bank, a beautician's parlor, a cigar store, a lingerie shop and a corner pharmacy by the red and green traffic light at the intersection. Behind them, the elevated rattled eastward into the city.

The street frontage of the hotel housed a barbershop, a delicatessen and a laundry, he discovered when he went back down to find a place to park the Hispano-Suiza. The huge car, with its louvered hood, flared fenders, and aristocratic radiator surmounted by a silver stork in flight, had already drawn a small crowd—and Farrell himself attracted no less attention when he ap-

peared on the sidewalk. He was wearing a silver-gray double-breasted suit, a violet and white striped tie with a mauve shirt, and pale gray spats over white-and-tan shoes. The brim of a pearl-colored fedora was slanted rakishly across his latin features.

He pushed his way unceremoniously through the knot of late afternoon shoppers, housewives and casual strollers to jerk open the door and settle himself behind the wheel. Beyond the laundry was the entrance to the Hawthorne Hotel, Capone's Cicero headquarters, and on the far side of that was the Hawthorne Restaurant and a fifty-foot vacant lot used as a car park.

He eased the Hispano in and was backing up into a space between a black Cadillac and the sidewalk, when a thickset man in a peaked cap came running up wagging an admonitory finger. 'Hey, mac—you can't leave that heap there!' he shouted.

'Who says?' Farrell rolled down the window and scowled, his right hand hovering near his lapels.

'No call to get sore, mister,' the man said nervously. 'Reckon you must be a stranger in town. That there caddy's the Big Man's personal transport. He don't like nothin' between him and the street.'

Farrell glanced curiously at the heavy sedan. This must be the \$30,000, seven-ton bullet-proof limousine with one-and-a-half-inch armored glass windows that Capone had ordered from the Cadillac company after Drucci, Moran and Weiss had raked his tourer with machine-gun fire in State Street some months ago. He peeled a sawbuck from his roll and handed it through the window. 'So find me a place on the other side,' he said.

When the Hispano was parked with its rear fenders almost against the wall, its front wheels were three feet ahead of the Cadillac's.

Farrell left it there long enough to be noticed, then took it out after dark and made a round of some of the suburb's pleasure haunts. He drank at the Barn and the

Burnham Inn, took a blonde upstairs at the Arrowhead, won \$2,000 at the roulette table behind the saloon in Lauterback's and then lost a thousand of them in a faro game at the Ship, beside the elevated terminal. The next day he played \$500 chips around the roulette wheel all afternoon, broke even, and went upstairs with a brunette. And all the time he was terse and uncommunicative, his eyes slitted and the bulge of the .38 Police Special in its shoulder holster noticeable beneath the sculpted shape of his jacket.

The girl had evidently been priced to pump him. 'What's a big city guy like you doin' in a dump like this?' she asked, running lacquered fingers along the muscled swell of his arm.

'Health trip,' Farrell said laconically. 'Figured it was time I took a powder from the dump I was in.'

'Where are you from?'

'East.'

'Sure. I know. I can see that. But I meant like where originally? You look kind of . . . well, more the latin type than an American.'

'Folks came from Palermo and I was born in Castellammare,' Farrell said. But he refused to be drawn any further.

Later, he went downstairs to the tables again and let the brunette play with his money. She won \$1,500 which he split with her fifty-fifty. Then he tipped the croupier a hundred dollars and moved to the bar.

He was nursing a beer at one end of the counter when one of the house men eased himself on to a vacant stool next to him—a curly-haired 200 pounder with eyes like chips of flint. 'The luck runs with you again today,' he said in Italian.

Farrell nodded and raised his tankard. 'Pin money. When it's really coming my way, I'll stake real money,' he replied in the same language.

'You are going to play some more today?'

Farrell shook his head. 'Tomorrow. Right now I could

use some action. Guess I'll go downtown and see what's cooking. Could you advise me a good place to start?"

'You could do worse than the Four Deuces,' the bouncer said. 'Twenty-two twenty-two South Wabash. Drive straight into town on 22nd Street and it's one block south.'

'Thanks, pal. See you again.'

'Any time. What did you say your name was?' the bouncer asked as Farrell slid from his stool.

'Faroli. Bruno Faroli.' He raised a hand and left the bar.

Toward the center of the city, the lights grew brighter, the electric signs more vivid, the crowds thronging the sidewalks denser. Farrell left the Hispano by the lake shore at the southern end of Grant Park and walked across South Michigan Avenue. There was a cold wind blowing off the water and he turned up the collar of his jacket, as he ducked into a side street opposite the Metropole Hotel. Gin-mill piano jangled up through an area grating and somewhere ahead a blues trumpet shivered the night air over the rumble of a late elevated running above South Wabash. Number 2222 was a four-story red brick building with a crowd outside the doors and a line of Lincolns, Packards, Nashes and Pierce-Arrows glittering under the lamplight by the curb.

This, Farrell knew, was Capone's downtown showplace—a combined bawdy house, saloon and gambling joint where troops from both sides in the booze war met to drink and brag and conspire. There would be no well-heeled slummers around the long mahogany bar: the Four Deuces was too tough for the dilettantes of the Gold Coast. Twelve murders had already been committed there and none of them were solved. But it was the likeliest place in Chicago to get next to the company commanders and field officers directing the war. Here, from the O'Banions' stronghold, would be Schemer Drucci, Bugs Moran, Polack Joe Saltis, the Klondyke

O'Donnell brothers, J. Nails Morton, who had won the *Croix de Guerre* with the 131st Illinois Infantry in France, and Hymie Weiss, the cold-eyed killer who had invented the one-way-ride routine. The Irish-Jewish federation controlling the North Side was collectively referred to as 'the O'Banions', after its original boss Dion O'Banion—shot dead in 1924 in the flower shop where he had prepared wreaths for so many other gangsters slain in the booze war. The killers were Scalise, Anselmi and Mike Genna, each paid \$10,000 and a \$3,000 diamond ring. O'Banion learned all he knew from Torrio, then double-crossed him. Said Capone: 'His head got away from his hat.' Here too, under the Syndicate banner, would be the Sicilian contingent—the six Terrible Gennas, Diamond Joe Esposito, Machine-gun Jack McGurn (whose real name was de Mora), Scalise and Anselmi, Capone's favored executioners who were known as the Homicide Squad, and Samoots Amatuna, a pale-browed dandy said to 'wear silk gloves on his soul'. It was Amatuna who introduced the technique of rubbing garlic on his dum-dums to ensure that the wounds, if not lethal, would at least become infected.

Farrell threaded his way through the crowd toward the entrance. The corner of the building housed a store above which was the sign: ALPHONSE CAPONE, *Second Hand Furniture Dealer*. In the display window were a rocking chair, an aquarium, three oak tables, a fernery, a bookshelf with a family bible, some cheap rugs, and a quantity of tooled leather novelties. Inside the swing doors waves of raucous conversation broke around his ears. The bar was jammed with tough-looking men in fedoras, wary-eyed, muscular and, for the most part, blue chinned. Only the nasal mid-Western shouts of the barkeeps filling orders fell naturally among the German and Polish gutturals, the soft cadences of brogue, and the rising inflections of Italian in the saloon.

Farrell mingled with the gesticulating drinkers and paid seventy-five cents for a shot of synthetic rye. Look-

ing around him at the groups of fast-talking characters, he found it easy to distinguish between the rival factions: the North Siders were perceptibly rougher, louder, more obviously plug-uglies than the snappily dressed, suave-voiced Sicilians of the Syndicate. Capone and Torrio were infiltrating an air of spurious respectability into an underworld that had previously been the preserve of hoodlums whose trade was advertised by their manner and features.

He choked down the raw liquor and ordered himself another. By now the grapevine would have been working. The Syndicate bosses in Cicero would be wise to the fact that the owner of the flashy automobile who had parked so impudently next to the Big Man's Cadillac, the stranger who staked big money on the tables, was one Bruno Faroli . . . and that Faroli was the one man still at liberty from the team which had made the spectacular jail-break some days before, the supposed author of the equally spectacular heist at the New York diamond exchange.

Ok, that gave him a background. But he needed better credentials than that if he was to be approached and recruited by the Syndicate. He must show himself not only to be a member of the fraternity, a successful hold-up man and jail breaker; he must also furnish some proof that he thought the right way, that he was tough enough and unscrupulous enough to offer them something. And the best way to do that, he figured, was to tangle in some way with the opposition. But not here at the Four Deuces. It was too obvious a place, too much in the lime-light; it would smell too much of the set-up it would be. Apart from which he could pick the wrong guy, needle some big shot and find himself on a one-way ride before he had even started. Better to find some less important joint, some small North Siders' enclave, and throw his weight around there in the hope that the news would percolate through to the Syndicate bosses in a more normal fashion.

He swallowed his second drink and made his way upstairs. The second and third floors of the building were devoted to gambling, the top to the whores who hung around the tables coaxing the winners to have just one more throw.

Farrell allowed himself to lose a couple of hundred dollars in a blackjack game and was about to move on when a girl dropped into the vacant chair next to him. 'Where have you been all my life, big boy?' she murmured.

He swung around and stared at her. A redhead with a bee-stung lower lip and two mounds of flesh below the neckline of her dress that looked as if they'd been stung by something larger. 'Beat it,' he said briefly.

'Aw, come on, honey! Don't be like that!' the girl wheedled. 'The first time this trick I see a guy he really makes my toes curl . . . and I get the dead brush-off!'

'Scram, sister,' Farrell said. 'I ain't winning anyway. You got no cause to make me stay, so what's the pitch?'

'I know it,' the girl said in a low voice. 'So maybe I got other reasons, huh? Like you're my type. Or something. Buy me a drink and I spill.'

At the bar, when he had bought her a highball and ordered another rye for himself, she said: 'Look, sugar, I go for you. No kidding. I been watching you play and there's something about you. We could make sweet music together. On the house. But there's something I have to do first and I could use your help.'

'Yeah?'

'Sure thing. I gotta deliver a message to this girlfriend of mine works in a club, and I need a gentleman escort. That's all.'

'So what?' Farrell said coldly. 'Why pick on me?'

She trailed practiced fingers up the inside of his thigh. 'You know why, big boy. Look—to tell the truth it's kinda delicate. I work here and this is a Syndicate house. The place I wanna go, it's on the other side. You know what I mean? It scares me some, so I'd like a little

muscle along with me, just in case. It's as simple as that.'

Farrell thought quickly. If the redhead was stepping out of line, visiting some joint run by the North Siders, it might be the opportunity he was looking for. 'What's this dump called? Who do they buy from?' he asked.

'The Persimmon. Rogolino buys from Teddy McGrath. He's in cahoots with the Aiellos and Moran. He ain't too popular around here.'

'Where is the place?'

'Thirty-fifth and Calumet. It ain't far . . . just a couple minutes in an auto.'

Farrell made up his mind. He drained his glass and tossed a ten-spot on the counter for the bartender. 'Let's go,' he said.

Outside, the wind blowing off the lake had freshened, scurrying used cigarette packs, gum wrappers and old newspapers around the corners of the bone-dry sidewalks. A three-quarter moon rode high in the mac-kereel sky. The girl caught her breath when she saw the Hispano. 'My, that's some buggy you have there!' she exclaimed admiringly.

'It suits me,' Farrell said carelessly. 'I had it imported from Europe. Used to belong to the king of Spain.'

'What is it, a Rolls Royce?'

'Nah. Hispano-Suiza. Like Spanish, see. Cost me eighteen grand.'

'Al paid thirty for his caddy. It's bulletproof.'

"So what am I supposed to do?" Farrell asked. 'Stand up and cheer? There ain't that number of guys gunning for me . . . yet.'

The Persimmon was noisy. Rusty Sampson and Bill Lardner were chasing fours on 'How Come You Do Me Like You Do, Do, Do?' while the drummer thrashed the skins. There were several large parties at the tables, and a crowd three deep along the bar. The redhead pushed her way through and stopped by two men with a blonde. 'Hiya, Princey,' she said. 'Meet Bruno Faroli, a

friend of mine just in from the East. Sugar, this is Princey Hartz . . . Pat Mullowney . . . Jason Mettner.'

Farrell took them in through slitted eyes. The fresh-faced Mullowney, husky and looking for trouble; Mettner, lean and saturnine; the blonde girl sheathed in a royal blue sequin dress. He nodded curtly in acknowledgement of the introduction. He was tingling at the thought of that body without the dress.

'Glad to know you, Bruno,' Mettner said. He was leaning back against the bar, his weight on his elbows and one heel hooked over the brass rail. There was a cigarette between his lips and his right eye was half closed against the smoke curling from its tip.

Princey said: 'Hey, a real man for a change! Sure am pleased to meet you, Mr. Faroli.' Her blue eyes held his gaze for a moment and then swept appreciatively over the rest of him. Mullowney said nothing.

The redhead was fumbling in her purse. She took out a sealed envelope and handed it to the singer. 'Message from your sister, Princey,' she said.

'Thanks. I was wondering when the bitch would find the time to write,' Princey said mechanically. She dragged her eyes away from Farrell and stowed the envelope in her own purse. The redhead glanced swiftly from one to the other. 'Gee, I gotta thirst on me you could cut,' she said with forced brightness. 'Any of you guys gonna offer a girl a drink?'

Mettner called up the bartender over his shoulder. 'Have one on *The Globe*,' he said. 'What'll it be, everybody?'

The band finished the number and went straight into a medium bounce version of 'Big Butter and Egg Man'. Farrell saw Princey's hand beating time to the music against her sequinned thigh. He raised an eyebrow. 'Dance?'

She turned and looked questioningly at Mullowney. 'Do you mind, Pat?'

'Go ahead,' the Irishman said. 'Sure, it's what you're

paid for, isn't it?' But he didn't look at Farrell. The red-head did, and her eyes were stormy.

On the dance floor, Princey swung her belly against the agent like a sack of ripe wheat and draped the soft contours of her body along him from chest to knee. He felt her thigh firm between his legs and the tightness of her fingers on the muscles of his arm. She flicked her thumb against the bulge of his shoulder holster. 'Is that the only rod you pack?' she asked softly.

The muscles at the back of Farrell's knees were trembling. He looked down through the mascara into her eyes. 'The other one's quicker on the draw,' he said.

They danced for a little in silence, and he felt her breath quicken against his cheek. 'If the next number's a slow, that's mine too,' he said.

'That could mean trouble with Pat.'

'Even if it's . . . what you're paid for?'

'You know the Irish,' Princey said. 'Once is ok; twice is an insult to his virility.'

They were back at the bar, under the redhead's jealous gaze and Mullowney's hot, hard stare, when someone on stage announced a bunny hug. Farrell grinned. 'That sounds like they're going to play our tune,' he said.

Rusty Sampson beat in four, and Lardner fed out the trombone slide to growl the Pack of Aces into 'Magnolia Blues'. Farrell turned around with his hand under Princey's elbow to guide her back to the floor. A finger tapped him forcefully on the shoulder. 'Just a minnit, fella,' Mullowney's voice grated. 'I don't know what they do where you come from, an' I don't care. But I'll have you know we don't hold with cuttin' in an' that sorta thing here. A girl's with a fella, she stays with him, see?'

Farrell swung back to stare coldly at the Irishman. 'Where I come from,' he said levelly, 'I make the rules. Do you want to make something of it?'

Mullowney was smiling, but his eyes were wintry. His

face was flushed from drinking and there were tiny beads of sweat above his eyebrows. 'Just lay off the broad, is all,' he said, pushing his extended forefinger against Farrell's chest.

'Take your hands off me, you slob,' Farrell snapped, knocking the finger savagely aside with the edge of his hand.

In the sudden silence that fell along the length of the bar, the cornet ripped into a break and swung the band into double time. An ensemble rideout blared from the far end of the long, low room as Mullowney went for his gun. Before his hand could dip in between his lapels, Farrell kicked him on the kneecap. The Irishman grunted and doubled up, his hands dropping involuntarily toward the brutalized leg. Farrell smashed a right cross to his jaw, kneed him in the groin, and then, as he folded forward again, seized the lapels in both hands and jerked Mullowney toward him, butting him in the face with the top of his head. The Irishman swayed on rubber legs, blood streaming from his flattened nose. Farrell hit him twice more—a right jab carrying all his weight that thudded in over the heart, and a vicious backhander that cracked out like a pistol shot and rocked the gangster's head back on his shoulders. Mullowney went down with a crash that made the glasses tinkle on the bar.

He struggled up on one elbow and reached for his gun again, but the Police Special was already in Farrell's hand, pointing steadily at his chest. 'On your way, mick,' the prohibition agent said tensely. 'And don't mess with me again or I might get *real* sore.'

Mullowney scrambled shakily to his feet, the jacket and vest of his suit streaked with scarlet. 'All right, buster,' he said thickly through the handkerchief held to his bloodied nose. 'I'll get you for this. You'll be sorry you ever saw me, you bastard.'

Farrell turned his back to him. 'For that I'm sorry already,' he said with a wink at Princey. The girl's eyes

widened. The redhead screamed. As soon as Farrell turned away, the furious Irishman had dived for his gun once more. But the agent was watching in the mirror behind the bar, hoping for just such an opportunity to complete the humiliation of his adversary. He was much too close to Mullowney for the attempt to succeed.

He whirled around, the barrel of the revolver in his own hand slashing against the Irishman's wrist before the gun was clear of his jacket. Mullowney cried out with pain as the metal cracked against bone. The gun dropped to the floor and Farrell's foot came hard down on it. 'I thought I told you to get out,' he snarled. 'Go play with your toys someplace else.'

For a long moment Mullowney stared at him malevolently over the bloodstained handkerchief. Then he turned on his heel and limped out of the club.

At once conversation around the bar broke out again with redoubled energy. The drinkers, who had crowded away as soon as the fight started, edged back with sidelong glances at Farrell. Here was another guy to watch out for in the dangerous jungle of night-time Chicago! Farrell bent down and picked up Mullowney's gun. There were six notches carved in the butt. He tossed it on to the counter and said to the bartender: 'Here—you take the heater. Maybe you can use it if the guy makes trouble here again.'

Jason Mettner hadn't moved since Farrell first came up to the bar. Now he pushed himself upright, plucked the stub of his cigarette from his lower lip, and dropped it to the floor. 'That wasn't exactly a smart thing to do,' he said.

'What? Throw that punk out, or give his gat to the bar-keep?'

Mettner sighed, swiveling his heel on the smoking stub. 'The whole deal,' he said. 'That punk happens to be one of Teddy McGrath's torpedoes—and McGrath controls this area. He supplies the liquor we're drinking now.'

Farrell shrugged. 'I should worry. Small-timers never did scare me.'

'Maybe not,' Mettner said. 'But there's no percentage in being spunky and dead. In your place, I'd pin two more eyes to the back of my head. Or hire me a body-guard. Or leave town.'

The agent clapped him on the shoulder and grinned. 'What you need is a drink!' he said. He fished his roll from his hip pocket and peeled off two centuries, flipping one across the polished mahogany of the counter. 'Sorry for the rumpus, folks,' he called. 'Some fourth-grader tried to horn in on the big guys' game. Set 'em up, bartender. The drinks are on me.' He gestured toward the customers crowding the bar.

As the drinkers nearest him raised their glasses, he nodded, thrust the revolver back into its holster, and turned to the two girls. Each of them was staring at him in open-mouthed admiration, the two pairs of eyes, the green and the blue, glistening with suppressed excitement. 'OK, sweetheart,' he said to the redhead. 'Been nice knowing you, but the party's over now. It's time you were on your way.'

'Well, I like that!' the girl protested. 'Didn't you hear what the man said—a guy's with a girl in this town, he stays with her?'

'I heard. Did *you* see what happened to *him*? Now come on, scram.' Farrell jerked his head at Princey. 'Me and her have business to attend to.'

'I'll bet!' the redhead cried shrilly. 'Say, what the hell is this—'

"Shuddup!" Farrell cut in roughly. He folded the second hundred dollar bill into four and tucked it into the neck of her dress. 'Here's your car fare home. Now quit bellyaching and beat it.' Nodding to Mettner, he took Princey's arm and steered her toward the artists' exit.

'For cryin' out loud!' the redhead exclaimed. She turned to the newspaperman. 'I s'pose you wouldn't care to see a girl home?' she said.

Upstairs in Princey's tiny dressing room, Farrell pitched his hat on to the davenport and reached for her. She smacked softly into his arms, her hands curling around his shoulders to cradle the back of his head. They kissed like there was no tomorrow, their bodies trembling. Finally Princey plucked her tongue away from his mouth and laid her forehead against Farrell's shoulder. 'You and me, baby,' she said in her throaty voice. 'Oh Jesus, you and me!'

He held her off and looked at her. Red cupid-bow lips wetly parted to show a gleam of teeth, blue eyes dilated. Rapidly above the sequins the soft swell of her breasts rose and fell. 'What they got up there . . . on the floor above?' he whispered.

'Beds,' Princey said. 'With private rooms around them—and built-in girls if you want. But that's carriage trade stuff for the paying customers and I wouldn't want you to have any part of it. The things you do to me, honey, it's strictly for kicks. What's wrong with right here?'

He glanced around at the litter of costumes and make-up. He nodded. 'I won't kid you it hasn't been done before,' Princey said. 'But at least it's me.' She broke off with a small sound of surprise as Farrell's fingers tightened on her back and ripped the fasteners of the blue sequin dress apart. The top half of the garment fell forward over her hips to expose her full breasts, the nipples already stiff with excitement.

Farrell's hands were full of flesh. 'For God's sake get on to that davenport before I go out of my mind,' he said. Releasing her abruptly, he swept his hat and a pile of discarded clothing to the floor and began tearing at the knot of his necktie. 'My God,' Princey said breathlessly a moment later, 'that's . . . I mean I knew you were my type, but—Oh, baby, come to mama!'

Ordinarily Farrell was a gentle and considerate lover, which accounted as much as his looks for his success with women. But if he was to consolidate the image he

was building up of an unscrupulous and callous racketeer, his bedroom behavior would have to be as crude and tough as his assumed manner. Maybe a girl like Princey preferred it that way. At least there was nothing phoney about his having hot pants for her!

He pushed her down on the sofa and made way for Bruno Faroli. Loudmouth Faroli, the B-girls' delight. Two-fisted Faroli, scourge of the speaks. Big Flash Faroli, his pistol unpacked. The glistening black crescents of Princey's lashes closed under the blonde halo of hair. The rasp of her breathing quickened in his ear.

He took her savagely, his fingers clawing at her body as her fleshy hips arched up to meet him. When it was over and the stifled cries of release had died away, they lay for a long time in silence, feeling the beating of their hearts through the barriers of flesh and bone.

At last she ran her fingers through his dark hair and murmured: 'Sweetie, you gotta go. I have another show in a half hour. And after that there's a guy comin' in. It's only my agent, but—'

'Ok, ok,' Farrell interrupted. 'I get the picture.' He pushed himself up into a sitting position and looked around for his shoes.

'Not in that tone of voice you don't,' Princey said. 'I mean, like he *is* my agent, for one thing. Number two—I don't want this to be the last time for you and me.'

'Me neither. It won't.'

She sat up suddenly and gazed into his eyes, laying a cool hand against the tangle of dark hairs matting his chest. 'You mean you don't *intend* it to be,' she said earnestly. 'But this is a tough burg to keep your promises in. Believe me, honey, that guy you beat up is real bad news, especially in this part of town. Besides, he figures he put a reserved ticket on me—and he'll never forgive you for shaming him in front of all those people. For God's sake be careful when you leave.'

Farrell reached for his clothes. 'I can take care of myself,' he said.

'I sure hope you're right. Call me tomorrow morning anyway, huh?'

Back in the bar, Farrell watched Princey's show, and then ordered himself a final drink. 'What time do you figure on leaving?' a voice asked by his elbow. He turned his head and saw Mettner lounging against the counter, the inevitable cigarette between his lips.

'What's it to you?' Farrell said curtly.

'There's a green Packard roadster with a soft top on the far side of the street,' Mettner said, ignoring the question. 'Three guys inside. Rats Hofner, Hymie Loeb—and the character you roughed up. They all carry guns for McGrath, who—'

'Who supplies this dump with liquor. Yeah, I know.'

'Well, watch out, that's all. And watch out for Maisie, while I'm plugging the uncle routine.'

'Maisie?'

'The redhead you came with, remember? She's mad as a hatful of rattlers because you stood her up. I just took her home. She was so mad she could hardly get her clothes off.' Mettner sighed. 'I wish to hell I had that kind of effect on women.'

Farrell smiled sourly. 'It don't work too bad on torpedoes either,' he said.

The newspaperman stared at him through the smoke from his cigarette. 'A sawbuck'll get you past the stage doorkeeper into a side street,' he offered.

'Thanks, pal.' Farrell nodded and then melted into the crowd.

Outside, it was colder than ever. The sky had paled over the rooftops to the east and the wind was taking a chorus among the street-car lines and telegraph wires netting the main drag. As Farrell edged around the corner from the Alleyway, a Stutz Bearcat driven by a youth in a raccoon coat and a straw hat roared past with a cargo of shrieking flappers. By the time the roadster's red taillight had vanished in the direction of the Loop,

he was crouching down behind a row of trash cans on the far side of the street.

The Hispano was half a block away, on the same side as the Persimmon. None of the hoods associated him with the car, and Farrell wanted it to stay that way as long as possible—but between the two of them was the green Packard, immediately opposite the soda fountain entrance to the club, as Mettner had said. How was he going to make it past the ambush?

He removed his fedora and peered around the side of one of the trash cans, at the same time lifting the hat cautiously above the level of the lids. There was a shadowy movement beneath the soft top of the roadster, and then flame spat from the open side. The crackle of the shots was drowned in the clangor of slugs slamming into the galvanized bins. A ricochet screamed off into the dawn—and there was a small hole drilled through the crown of the fedora. Evidently the hoods must have spotted him sprinting across the roadway in the wake of the Stutz.

Farrell unholstered his revolver and sighted through a gap between two of the trash cans. The Police Special roared and bucked in his hand. The shadowy figures in the Packard ducked down as the windshield shattered. Farrell emptied the magazine and ran for a doorway five yards nearer the ambushers' car.

Splinters of brickwork stung his face, and bullets whined away to duet with the wind as he flattened himself in the recess. McGrath's gunmen sure were fast on the draw! He reloaded the .38 and ducked out for long enough to take two more shots at the Packard. One of the men inside fired back, but the other two had already hit the ground on either side of the car. One—he thought it was Mallowney—was stealthily creeping along the sidewalk toward him, as close as he could get to the wall. The other ran across to the far side of the street. Farrell could see him as he shrank back into the

doorway: a small, rat-faced man moving in a crouch behind the line of automobiles parked outside the Persimmon.

Farrell was in a tight spot. The hood across the road had only to draw level with the doorway and he would be a sitting duck, no longer protected by the shoulder of brickwork. Yet if he attempted to make a break and run for it, Mullowney, who must be only a few feet away now, would shoot him down as he left the shelter of the recess. Farrell lifted the gun and fired two more shots obliquely across the street. There was a tinkling of glass and a strangled shout. One of the slugs had caught the rat-faced man as he passed a gap between two cars. He spun around clutching at his right arm and dropped from sight. His gun flew from his hand and thumped metallically against the coachwork of a Buick sedan.

Farrell poked his hand around the corner of the doorway and blasted off the last two shots in the chamber at random, parallel to the wall of the building. Mullowney's answering fire overlapped the explosions of the Police Special. Something plucked at the sleeve of Farrell's jacket before he could snatch his arm back, and there was a sudden searing pain in his bicep.

Hastily he broke the revolver and fed shells into the chamber. He knew from the feel of his hand and fingers that it was only the slightest of creases, a graze across the surface of the skin. None of the joints was affected. Should he fire blind at Mullowney again, now that the man across the road was out of the way, and then make a dash for it?

Before he could decide the street was hideous with noise. A police flivver with the soft top broadsided in from the intersection, the gong on its running board clanging, and screeched to a halt beside the Packard. Uniformed men piled out and surrounded the car, then fanned across the road.

Farrell dodged out of the doorway and ran for the alley, pitching his gun into the trash can as he passed. He

pounded past the side door of the Persimmon and had almost reached the far end of the narrow lane when half a dozen cops led by a man in plain clothes crowded into the alley and blocked his way. He pulled up, gasping, 'What's the idea?' he panted.

'That's my line,' snapped the plain-clothes man, a lantern-jawed individual wearing a wide-brimmed hat and an open trench coat. He flipped back his lapel to show a police badge and said: 'Lieutenant Mulligan, Hanson Street precinct. What the hell are you doing here? Why were you running? Where are you going? What's your name?'

Farrell answered the last question and ignored the rest. 'Faroli,' he said. 'Bruno Faroli.'

'What's your hurry, Faroli?'

'My mother doesn't like me to be out late,' Farrell said. 'She's scared I'll get into bad company. I was hurrying home before she wakes.'

Mulligan stared at him for a moment, his craggy face thoughtful in the early light. Over the bluster of the wind, a jazz trumpet soared and plunged somewhere away to their left. 'Funny guy,' the lieutenant observed at last. He slid a stick of gum into his mouth. 'I asked you where you been.'

'Dump calls itself the Persimmon. Fifty yards back there.'

'I can check that.'

'Be my guest,' Farrell said. 'You want a written testimonial from the broad I laid on the third floor?'

'Wise guy as well. I don't go too strong on wise guys in this precinct. Who were you shooting at back there?' Mulligan rapped out suddenly.

'Shooting? I didn't hear any shooting. I don't even have a gun.'

The policeman compressed his lips. 'OK boys—frisk him and take him back to the station,' he said wearily.

The trumpet clawed its way up to a high C, as the coppers hustled Farrell away in the chilly dawn.

Three men were lined up against the grimy yellow wall of the bull pen at the precinct house—Mullowney, Hymie Loeb and Rats Hofner, his weasel features drawn with pain as he clutched the bloodstained dressing on his injured arm. Loeb was tall and massively built, a gorilla with a pale face and agate eyes beneath a thatch of straw-colored hair. The Irishman's nose had spread half way across his bruised features.

The room smelled of sweat and disinfectant and stale cigar smoke. Two bulls typed up reports in back, and half a dozen more lounged against the wall between the three men and the door. Mulligan pushed Farrell in ahead of him and hitched one leg up on to a littered desk as he shifted the wad of gum from one side of his mouth to the other. 'All right,' he said. 'Let's have it again before we sweep you under the mat.'

'You got no right to hold us,' Loeb said in a flat, emotionless voice. 'We was sittin' in the jalopy, waitin' for a friend he should leave the speak. All of a sudden this bird shows up, he starts shootin' at us. We shoot back, natural. We gotta right to protect ourselves. We got permits for the gats.'

'Sure, sure, sure,' the lieutenant said. 'And this is the guy, right?'

The cold eyes swept over Farrell. 'Uh-uh. The guy who shoots at us is a little guy,' Loeb said. 'A little blond guy. With a mustache.'

'Hofner?'

'I didn't see him,' the wounded hood said sullenly. 'I was crossin' the street to the club. Like to see if our buddy was fixin' to quit. And I got plugged in the arm, is all. I never laid eyes on the guy.'

Mulligan sighed. 'You were on the sidewalk, Mullowney. You musta been pretty close. It was almost daylight. Is this the man?'

The Irishman turned and stared at Farrell. The blue eyes still glittered malevolently on either side of his battered nose. Then he shook his head. 'I never saw him before in my life,' he said.

Mulligan shaded his eyes with one hand. His face was gray with fatigue. 'You,' he said tiredly. 'Faroli. The three guys who shot at you . . .'

'Nobody shot at me, Lieutenant,' Farrell cut in. 'I told you.'

Suddenly the policeman was on his feet, his extended index finger flicking the half-inch-wide shred of cloth curling back from the tear in the sleeve of Farrell's jacket. 'And I suppose you're going to tell me you didn't know this was here?' he snarled. 'Or do you always buy your jackets with built-in air conditioning?'

'That?' Farrell tried not to flinch away from the finger stabbing against the graze on his arm. He looked down at the sleeve. 'I musta ripped it on a coathook. I told you I was in a hurry to get away from that broad. Boy, she was really a man-eater,' he said with a shake of his head.

'And this?' Mulligan had whipped the fedora from the agent's head and was pointing at the bullet hole in the crown. 'How did this happen? Termites?'

Farrell took back the hat and turned it around in his hands. 'Like you just said,' he replied. 'Ventilation.'

'Are you telling me,' the lieutenant roared, 'that those are not bullet holes caused by shots fired from weapons held by these three men?'

'I never laid eyes on these gentlemen until you brought me in here,' Farrell said.

Mulligan's face was red. A muscle twitched at the corner of his wide mouth. 'I'm tellin' you bums . . .' he began. And then he paused, threw up his hands, and strode to the door. 'Ah, what's the use,' he muttered disgustedly. 'Sergeant—turn 'em loose before they make me puke!'

Five

'A war historian, undertaking to reconstruct a modern military campaign in all its intricacy and gargantuan confusion of movement, has a straightforward task compared with that of describing the fighting between Chicago's booze barons . . . gangs issued no communiqués and preserved no battle orders, the reasons for particular assaults and assassinations were often recondite personal feuds arising out of deeply internal quarrels and betrayals, the pattern of alliances was forever in a state of fluidity and flux, and, in place of a sustained clash of arms, the battles took the form of sporadic skirmishes, ambushes, sudden pounces upon individuals, jousts between moving cars similar to dog-fights between fighter aircraft, and the unpredicable, shifting collisions of guerrilla warfare.'

KENNETH ALLSOP, *The Bootleggers*

Farrell plastered the graze on his gun arm and went to bed. The next day the arm was stiff, but there seemed to be no infection. He figured he'd take it easy for a couple of days while it healed up, but show himself around the night spots just the same. No trouble, though: the word would have gotten around about his encounter with McGrath's trigger men—and how he'd obeyed the gangland code and clammed up in front of Lieutenant Mulli-

gan. Best now to lie low and see which way the wind blew off the lake.

He went to hear String Beans sing at the Monogram Theater, stomped with the rest of them when Bessie Smith belted out 'Gimme a Pigfoot and a Bottle of Gin' at the Avenue, took in Ethel Waters playing 'Miss Calico', and shouted himself hoarse at Alberta Hunter's version of 'Loveless Love' during her return engagement at the black-and-tan Dreamland Café. There was a whole block of sawdust-floored gin-mills on 35th Street between State and Calumet where Big Sid Catlett, Manzie Johnson and O'Neil Spencer powered the driving rhythm sections that sent the clarinets, cornets and saxophones riding out into the hardboiled, choppy ensemble choruses distinguishing the hot music of the city. Farrell heard them all. He listened to Louis at the Sunset and Jimmy Noone's liquid clarinet at the Apex; he visited the Panama, the Dreamland, the Fiume and the Plantation. He drank and gambled and danced some, and whored a little. And on the morning of the fifth day, he found a message waiting for him when he returned to the Anton Hotel in Cicero just after dawn.

He unfolded the scrap of paper the night clerk had given him, and read it in the lobby. There was an address off Wacker Drive at the top of the sheet, and underneath a single line of slanting, unformed script:

Please come at once. Urgent. I need your help bad-Princey.

'Who brought this message in?' he asked the clerk.

The man raised his head from a dime novel and shrugged. 'Some kid. Said a blonde had given him a ten-spot to leave it by. Musta been a coupla hours ago. He wanted to know what time the el kicked off.'

'I guess he musta ridden out here from the center of the city then,' Farrell said.

The clerk sniffed. 'I should be so lucky,' he said—although whether it was the blonde or the money he

was envying, it was hard to say. Farrell assumed the latter, dropped a bill on the desk, murmured 'Thanks, pal,' and hurried out again to the parking lot where he had left the Hispano.

Wacker Drive followed the murky course of the Chicago River just north of the Loop. Farrell left the car near the bridge at the top of Dearborn Street, and walked the half block back to the address he had been given. Below the wharves a breeze blowing off Lake Michigan flattened the surface of the water swirling toward Grant Park and the Harbor. Over the serrated roofline on the other side of the Drive, early morning sunlight gilded the Sherman Hotel, the City Hall, and the skyscrapers on State Street and La Salle.

He waited for a street-car to clang past and then crossed the road. There was very little traffic at this hour and the sidewalks were deserted. Away to his left the foghorn of a steamer bleated mournfully out on the lake.

Curled crisps of fallen leaves littered the steps of the brownstone where Princey lived. A dispirited sycamore masked the lower windows. What kind of trouble had she run into? What kind of help did she need? Was the Irish gunman leaning on her because she had fancied a stranger? If so, why had he waited so long? Farrell pushed open the hallway door and stepped inside.

He checked that his revolver, retrieved from the trash can after Mulligan released him, was loose in its holster. It would be smart to be prepared: the territory of the Bugs Moran gang, which was affiliated with McGrath, started on the other side of the river.

Apartment 1-C was on the ground floor at the back. The door was ajar. Farrell opened it a foot and sidled through.

A short dark passage with kitchenette and bathroom leading off to left and right. Beyond it a pint-sized living room with flowered drapes drawn over the window and two wall-bracket gaslights flaring. An odor of coffee and

last night's cigarette smoke and cosmetics. 'Princey?' he called softly. 'Are you there?'

Silence.

Farrell listened, his head on one side. The steady hissing of the gas burners, the drip of a faucet, the hurried ticking of a clock beyond an open doorway through which daylight streamed, manifested themselves in the quietness. He unholstered his gun and tiptoed through into a bedroom scattered with female garments—silk stockings across the unmade bed, lacy black underclothes on the floor, a jumble of beaded evening gowns beneath empty hangers in a closet. Beyond the window was a narrow lane with a green Packard roadster parked in it.

Mullowney was sitting in a chintz-covered armchair between a boudoir table and the closet. His legs were crossed and his hands were folded in his lap. 'Well, if it isn't the hard man himself!' he said softly. 'I was kinda hopin' you might show up, boyo. There's a coupla things I have to say to you at-all.'

As Farrell's fingers tensed on the butt of the .38, the door swung silently shut behind him. He started to whirl around, alarm bells signaling wildly from brain to muscle. But the message was too late. Something moved in the air and a great weight descended on his head. Then blackness roared in through the window and he hit the floor.

'Just a couple of weeks,' Jason Mettner pleaded with the city editor of *The Globe*. 'That's all I'd need—and it could make a swell situationer. You know . . . anatomy of a mobster. Inside one of the racketeers who have dragged our city through the mud. What makes a torpedo tick. That kind of thing.'

The city editor wore a green eye-shade and there was an unlit cigar between his lips. He sat among shrilling bells and copy boys and pneumatics and the chuntering

of teletype machines in a long room loud with the clacking of typewriters. 'Don't know,' he said. 'Good, those pieces are that you're doing on the bands. Atmosphere. Color. They're useful fillers in the magazine section. Crime reporters we got already.'

'I already filed four extra band pieces with Features,' Mettner urged. 'Enough to keep you going for a couple of weeks. This is a paper with a wet policy in a city that votes five to one wet. If we come out against the dry reformers, surely we have a duty to turn the spotlight on the bad things that wet policy brings too?'

'Maybe. You could have a point there.' There was cigar ash in the creases of the city editor's unbuttoned vest. He wore white celluloid cuffs over his striped shirtsleeves. 'But I wouldn't want no glamorizing of some two-bit hood just the same,' he said. 'What's so special about this guy anyway?'

'Faroli? I wish I knew. Something. And that's what I want to find out. If I could just stay next to him for these two weeks...'

'Anything in the morgue?'

'Not a line,' Mettner said. 'That's just one of the screwy things—'

'Why not one of the big shots?' the editor interrupted. 'Moran? Torrio? Capone? One of those.'

'Done to death. Besides they've no more to give: they're just the boardroom fronts for a \$60 million a year industry. The illicit liquor trade. Imagine trying to get something *personal* out of those guys! But this bird Faroli... I don't know. It's just a hunch. But I'm certain there's a story there.'

'What's he got that they ain't got?'

'Intelligence for one thing. And something else. There's some mystery there. He shows up with no background and the biggest, dearest automobile west of New York city. He spends dough like it was eggs in all the joints. He beats up a torpedo and takes his broad. He shoots it out with three McGrath triggermen, and

then sasses the only honest cop in town. Yet he ain't hooked up with any of the rackets. There's *got* to be a story there!

The city editor crossed his arms and pushed up the expanding metal bracelets around his shirtsleeves. 'Ok, ok,' he growled. 'For two weeks as of today you're assigned to the Crime Desk . . .' He broke off as a carrier thumped out of the pneumatic tube and dropped into the wire basket beneath. A copy boy unscrewed the cap and placed a wad of typescript on top of his overflowing 'in' tray. The phone beside the tray rang.

The editor picked up the instrument in his right hand and unhooked the receiver with his left. 'City desk,' he barked into the mouthpiece. 'Matthews speaking. Hold it, will you?' He looked up under the green shade at Mettner. 'And I don't want no Capone-size expenses on this deal,' he said. 'You got your two weeks. But any entertainin' you do comes out of your pocket and not *The Globe's*. Right?'

'Ok,' Mettner said. 'Ok—and thanks, chief.'

Matthews pressed the receiver to his ear. 'Shoot,' he said. 'What? . . . How many dead? . . . Ok. Hundred and fifty words. I'll put you through.' Still holding the instrument in his right hand, he jiggled the receiver rest up and down with his forefinger. 'Connie?' he asked. 'Put this through to Copy, willya?'

Mettner grabbed his notes and hurried away before the big man changed his mind.

A giant with a sledgehammer was trying to batter his way out of Farrell's skull. Farrell opened his eyes. Pain seared through his head from temple to temple as light penetrated the pupils. He was staring down at a limitless field of green stalks. Dust tickled his nostrils. He sneezed, wincing with agony as the spasm jerked his head. The green field was a wall-to-wall carpet. Groaning, he rolled over on his back.

Mullowney, Hymie Loeb and Rats Hofner were gazing

down at him. Hofner's injured arm was pinned into a sling. Beyond them, Farrell could see a kneehole desk with a pair of crossed legs under it sporting loud yellow and brown checkered pants with polished tan oxfords. 'Get up,' Mullowney said.

Farrell stared at him in bewilderment. What had happened? Where was he? And why...? As memory flooded back, the Irishman strode across and kicked him on the hip. Farrell cried aloud at the pain flaring through the bone. 'I told you to get up,' Mullowney shouted.

Farrell levered himself into a sitting position, turned on to his hands and knees, and shakily pushed himself upright. As he stood swaying in the center of the room, Hofner planted the sole of one shoe at the base of his spine and then suddenly straightened his leg. Farrell went down on to his face again. Mullowney seized him by the collar and hauled him upright. 'Why don't you do what you're told and stand up?' he demanded. 'Eh? Why don't you?' He punctuated each question with a more forceful shove against Farrell's chest. Farrell staggered back and cannoned into Loeb. The big man pushed him violently away. Hofner stuck out a foot and Farrell tripped to fall heavily on his back.

'Get up!' Mullowney roared yet again. 'On your feet, you, when you're talkin' with Mister McGrath!'

Hofner sniggered. 'All right, boys,' the man behind the desk said quietly. 'That'll do for now.'

For the third time Farrell struggled up. The pounding at the base of his skull was intolerable. He squinted his eyes and tried to focus on his surroundings. He saw Mullowney's red face, still marked but less puffy around the nose now; Rats Hofner's mean features twisted into a malicious grin; the expressionless eyes of Hymie Loeb. Beyond them were steel filing cabinets, a low table crowded with bottles and glasses, and the desk.

The man behind it was muscular but slightly built.

Above the checkered jacket his head was curiously youthful—small, pale-lashed eyes in an unlined face, small ears set close to the skull, smooth sandy hair brushed sideways with an unruly tuft sticking up at the crown. 'I don't read you, fella, at all,' he said to Farrell. His voice was a light tenor with an Irish burr. 'I'm thinkin' maybe you're wantin' in. I don't know. But there's no room for outsiders in this town, I'll tell you that. You been makin' trouble with the broads, and I cannot thole that.'

'It's a free country, isn't it?' Farrell said thickly.

'Not in my experience,' McGrath said. 'Everythin' has to be paid for, that's the way of it. You're after payin' for meddlin' in my affairs right now. Or you will be. Just by way of teachin' you a lesson. I'd have you put away, only there's kind of an agreement in force not to spill blood. But I'm tellin' you—do it again and the treatment will be worse. Much worse. And if it should come to a third time, then it'll be a one-way ride for you, my boyo, agreement or no agreement. Make no mistake about that.'

He leaned back in his chair and nodded. 'All right, boys,' he said. 'You can work him over a little now.'

Farrell tensed in a desperate attempt at self-protection as the three hoods moved in on him. But before he could raise a hand to defend himself, the massive bulk of Loeb was at his back, his arms were seized in a crushing grip, and he was lifted half off the floor.

Still wearing the same sadistic grin, Rats Hofner stepped in, swung his good arm, and punched the helpless agent viciously in the pit of the stomach. Farrell retched. His knees jerked up as he tried vainly to jack-knife his body against the vise-like arm lock holding him straight. The rat-faced little hood drew back his fist, measured his distance, and slammed another blow to the agent's unprotected belly. Farrell heaved in Hymie Loeb's grasp. His breath croaked from his lungs

in an anguished gasp. Hofner hit him for the third time in the same place. This time the pinioned man's savaged belly muscles rebelled. He threw up, vomiting noisily over the front of the silver-gray suit.

'Dirty bastard,' Mallowney said. 'That's another lesson you'll have to learn, boy.' Almost affectionately, he slapped Farrell's lolling head from side to side, speaking between each slap. 'Don't... foul up... Mister... McGrath's... nice... clean... carpet!' He drew back, stared into Farrell's glazing eyes, and added: 'For me own part, there's a small matter of a debt to be repaid...'

His fist crashed into the agent's face with all his weight behind it. Farrell gave a strangled grunt. His nose split and blood joined the vomit staining his suit.

'With interest,' Mallowney said, drawing back his arm again. The blow sank into Farrell's solar plexus. Leob released his grip and Farrell slumped to the floor.

They picked him up by the arms and dragged him, with feet trailing, through an open doorway into a bathroom. Mallowney draped him over the edge of the tub and ran cold water over his head and shoulders until he stirred and groaned. Then they hustled him back into the other room and propped him up against a wall.

Farrell clawed his way back to semi-consciousness through a red mist of pain. Pain tore at his guts, flamed through his nerves and thundered behind his eyes. A long way off, his image blurring and sharpening, McGrath still sat in his chair, his hands palm downwards on the desk in front of him, watching with dispassionate interest. Then the huge bulk of Hymie Loeb hid him from view.

The big torpedo's flinty eyes narrowed in his cliff-like face. He bunched his right fist, spat on the knuckles, and then smoothed them with the palm of his other hand. Steadying Farrell with an outstretched arm, he hauled off and dealt him a murderous blow over the heart. Farrell gave a deep groan and slid down the wall.

Muldowney and Rats Hofner lifted him by the arms and held him crucified there, while Loeb waded into him again. The ring of crimson spots staining the carpet around Farrell's feet widened.

For a while McGrath listened to the smack and thud of fists on flesh and bone, the panting of the hoods, and the explosions of breath driven from the unconscious man's lungs by the savage beating he was taking. Then he reached for a cigarette, and pushed back his chair. 'I'm thinkin' he has enough taken,' he said, 'by the look of him. Tidy him up some and then run him back into town.'

'You want this schmuck he should be thrown out of the car?' Loeb asked. 'Like at fifty miles an hour?'

'No,' McGrath said. 'Not this time. This time he has been hurted enough. Lay him down nice and gentle in the alley outside the club. And if a person should see you, tell him the old story—he is some fella has taken a sup too much of the drink.'

Loeb stared down at the ruin of Farrell's face and shook his head. 'A second chance he gets!' he murmured. 'Brother, you should be so lucky!'

Six

There was young guys, high-school kids, used to hang around the joints where the jazz bands played. They would listen and get all excited—it was an exciting time, with the night life and the bootlegging and the racketeers, and money everywhere—and maybe they would want to play that music themselves. Some of them were so young they wouldn't even let them in: they sat on the sidewalks and listened by open windows on summer nights or waited at the doors just to catch two, three bars when the people came in or out. Benny Goodman was one of those. He started when he was fourteen. Muggsy Spanier was another. Then sometimes their daddy would buy them an instrument and they would learn to play and try to copy the music. Some of them even got jobs playing at one of the clubs. And that was exciting too. Only playing there meant that they got mixed up with the hoods who ran those places or supplied the liquor. And that wasn't so good.

The bank was half way to Burnham on the South Side, a couple of miles inside the city limits and not far from Lake Calumet. It was a corner building at an intersection, a sawn-off gothic facade with round-end shingles and full corner bay windows above the steps leading to the double swing doors. Farrell had decided to knock it off for several reasons. For one thing, he needed more

money—and he was unwilling to contact Stevens at this stage of the game. A one-man stick-up would supply this need within the broad terms of the latitude given him by the man in Washington, and at the same time further the gangster image he was trying to establish. Most important of all, he could use it to try out Princey Hartz.

The voluptuous singer had been knocked for a loop when Farrell's battered, unconscious body had been discovered in the alleyway outside the Persimmon stage door. She had wept, she had stormed, she had vowed vengeance on McGrath and his men. To the beaten agent her outrage and her sympathy had seemed perfectly genuine. On the other hand he had been warned to trust nobody in Chicago . . . and Princey worked for a McGrath house, was said to be the girlfriend of a McGrath hood. Had she in fact, as she swore, known nothing of the message that lured Farrell to her apartment, and still been at the club when he was ambushed there by Mullowney and the others?

Or had she been stringing him along on instructions from the gang boss? Had she been a willing accomplice in the plot?

He had to find out. For if she could be trusted, she could be of great use to him—as she already had been indirectly—giving him an in to the McGrath mob, furnishing them with a reason for their hostility toward him, and thus, he hoped, making him a desirable property to their Syndicate enemies.

He would test her, he decided, by confiding in her the details of the plan to hold up the bank. If McGrath waylaid him on the way out and took the loot off him, then the blonde was three strikes and out. If it all went off without a hitch, then she was ok. But it was vital that he find out one way or the other, for his future plans depended on it.

The idea for the heist had come to him while he was resting up. Although he hurt like hell and his body was

a black, blue and yellow mass of bruises and lacerations, there were no bones broken and he had scorned hospital treatment, preferring to lie low in a quiet hotel in the Burnham suburb. Princey had driven him there in the Hispano and been to see him every day. She had tried to dissuade him from the raid as he had no protection in the city; but once she saw he was determined to go through with it, she had laid off and contented herself with telling him for God's sake to be careful and play it safe. 'People in the liquor industry are above the law in this town,' she said. 'They don't mess with stick-ups and burglaries and muggings and suchlike. It don't pay so good. But a loner he tries that on, the cops throw the book at him. It makes it seem like they're earning their money.'

'If they catch him,' Farrell said.

'Sure if they catch him. But sometimes they do. So this is why I'm saying for Chrissake take care. And don't use the heat. They nail you on a shooting rap and they're like to make an example of you for all the gang killings that never get indicted. I mean like a long stretch.'

'This bed's wide enough for a long stretch,' Farrell said. 'Why don't you come on in and 'tend to a sick man?'

'Oh, you!' Princey said, reaching for her shoulder strap.

The bank was in a neighborhood shopping center. Once it had been a ritzy, residential district, but the big Victorian mansions with their turrets and spires were all rooming houses now, their wood floors scratched and worn, the wide, sweeping staircases dark with cheap varnish laid over decades of filth. Around them were flyblown restaurants and gimcrack apartment buildings, five-and-tens and Italian fruit stands, and candy shops selling dime-store novels and other things even less palatable than the candy. The wide cracked sidewalks were full of young women with old, gray faces and

shifty-eyed men, who looked the street over between a pulled-down hat brim and a cupped hand shielding a match flame before they crossed the street-car tracks to the cigar store running the numbers game.

Farrell had chosen it because the intersection was complicated and there was always a snarl of traffic around the stop where the car tracks crossed. Also it gave him a choice of five roads from which he could double back to the place where he planned to leave the Hispano. He figured it was better to take a chance on losing himself in the crowds than leave such a conspicuous auto with the motor running outside the bank.

The stick-up went off like a breeze. Farrell had been in several times to check out the routines and case the joint. He was climbing the steps in the morning as the uniformed bank guard unlocked the steel trellis grille and folded it back in front of the doors. Farrell was wearing a long black topcoat with a black fedora pulled low over his eyes. As the man stood aside to let him pass he pulled the Colt from his coat pocket and snapped: 'Lock it again.'

The guard gaped at him. 'Wha—?'

'Lock it or you're a dead man!' the undercover man rasped. He pulled a loosely knotted handkerchief up over his nose and mouth and twitched the guard's .45 out of its holster as the man slammed the grille back into place with shaking hands. Nobody below the steps in the street seemed to have noticed. There was a fine rain falling and they were too busy tucking their chins into their collars. Any early customers would just think the bank was a little late opening up, Farrell reasoned.

He prodded the guard through the swing doors before him and fired a shot from his own gun into the ceiling. 'All right,' he shouted, 'this is a stick-up! Everybody up on top of those counters. Move!'

The shot sounded deafeningly in the marble calm of the bank. But there were street-cars clanging outside and

the wet roadway was loud with the grinding of rush-hour gears. He hoped a single detonation would pass for a backfire.

Behind the wood and frosted glass partitions the bank personnel were feeding their floats into drawers under the polished counter. The manager had come out of his office to superintend the operation, as he did every morning of the week. That would be one less alarm button to think of. Manager, staff and guard, they were up on those counters almost before the echoes of the shot had died away! You didn't wait for a gunman to tell you twice in Chicago in the twenties.

Farrell jumped up after them and leaned his back against the wall at the end of the counter. From here he could look down over the three rows of partitions and check that nobody had ducked out of sight in a quixotic attempt to reach one of the other alarm buttons, or grab a gun.

A door opened in back, and a second guard walked through carrying two small but heavy sacks of coins. He must have been in the strongroom when the shot was fired, and heard nothing. His jaw dropped when he saw the white-faced tellers and clerks perched up above their tills. Before he could react, Farrell slanted the barrels of both guns down toward him and ordered: 'Just keep hold of both of those sacks and walk this way . . . slow and easy.'

The guard was a big man, but he was elderly. His grizzled face turned red and he lowered his eyes. Watched from above by the manager and the other guard, and the men and women of the staff, he shuffled along between the counters until he was immediately below Farrell. The undercover man kneeled down and plucked the guard's gun from its holster, stuffing it into a pocket of his topcoat. 'Ok,' he grated. 'Now empty one of the sacks. Put all the bills from those tellers' drawers into it. Then bring it back to me. But fast.'

There was sweat on the manager's forehead. 'We don't

carry too much out front,' he said almost apologetically as the guard stuffed the neatly wrapped bundles of banknotes into the sack. 'The big stuff's all in the strong-room. You want—'

'Shuddup!' Farrell snarled. 'When I want big stuff I'll go to a big bank. You think I'm dumb or something? You think maybe you can fool me with that strongroom routine... while you go call the cops? Open your fat mouth again and I'll plug you.'

The manager swallowed audibly and shut up, his jowls quivering over his white celluloid collar. It was really too easy, Farrell thought. He felt like a ham actor playing a heavy in a B picture from Hollywood.

There was a loud click as the minute hand of the clock on the wall moved on one division. The guard emptied the bills from the last drawer and slid the sack along the counter toward Farrell's feet. Somebody rattled the steel grille outside the entrance doors.

The hand of the clock clicked on again. Everyone except Farrell was staring at the doors—and the blurred shadows showing against the frosted glass. 'Open up!' a man's voice shouted angrily. 'It's five after already!' The grille rattled again, more loudly this time.

'Coming!' Farrell called. 'Just hold it a minute!' There was a glassed-in interview room beside the manager's office. He gestured toward it with one of the guns. 'Get in there, all of you,' he hissed, 'and make it quick if you wanna stay in one piece!' Stepping along the counter in front of the partition, he herded the scared employees through the door.

'Not you, sweetheart,' he said to a frail blonde girl wearing shell glasses. 'You're gonna take those keys from the general there and let me outa the side door.'

When the girl had got the keys from the first guard, he closed the door and bolted it on the outside. They would smash the glass and let themselves out the moment he had gone, but it would give him the time he needed. He scooped up the sack of bills, and told the girl

to lead him to the side entrance he knew was through the door leading to the vault. She was pale and trembling, the flesh beneath the bun on the nape of her neck covered in goose bumps.

Beyond the side door was a washroom. 'Get in there and count up to a hundred,' he told the tearful blonde. 'If you don't wanna get hurt, don't come out at ninety-nine!'

She shivered and hurried through. Farrell opened the door she had unlocked, put his own gun back in its holster, shoved the second guard's into the other pocket of his topcoat, and stepped outside.

As he pulled the handkerchief down off his face, the rain struck cold on his cheeks. He glanced swiftly up and down the side street. A crowded street-car rocking toward the intersection. People hurrying along the glistening sidewalks, their heads bent. Automobiles crawling in each direction, tires sucking at the greasy macadam, honking at jaywalkers crossing the road. But no green Packard among the cars parked by the curb, no sign of McGrath, Mullowney or the others. Glass shattered in the building behind him. He ran down the steps.

He was halfway across the sidewalk when he saw the tourer. It was angling in to the corner by the steps leading to the bank's main entrance, rear wheels shrieking as they slewed across the wet roadway. There was a gong on the left-hand running board... the tonneau was full of men in blue!

A similar car threaded its way through the stalled traffic in the side street, the motor roaring, the gong clanging.

McGrath might not be waiting for him, but it sure looked as though the law was!

Farrell raced out into the road, dodged a delivery truck and a big sedan, and then cut in front of a street-car as the brakes squealed and the motorman swore. Alarm bells shrilled over the grumble of traffic. Whis-

tles blew. A siren soared up the scale. He looked over his shoulder. A man was at the top of the steps leading to the side door, shouting, pointing. Cops fanned out toward him through the cars and trucks clogging the street. Farrell ran.

He made the far sidewalk and sprinted up an alleyway. Fifty yards along, a lane led off to the right—and this curved and then split in two on either side of a wedge-shaped warehouse. Just before the junction there was a deep doorway leading to a disused house. Farrell had stashed a yellow slicker there, and a straw hat with an oilskin cover, before he went to the bank. As the shouting and the pounding of feet in the alley behind increased in volume, he ducked into the doorway, tore off the black coat and hat, and bundled them into a dark corner. When the cops clattered past he was standing in the slicker and straw hat, a bunch of keys in his hand, apparently letting himself out of the house.

The police halted in front of the warehouse. A burly sergeant ran back to Farrell. 'Hey, you! . . . You see a big guy in a black coat and fedora a minute ago?'

'Running?'

"Yeah, yeah, runnin'. Which way did he go?'

Farrell pointed to the left-hand lane. "That way. He was in one hell of a hurry. Did he . . .?" But the sergeant was already leading his men up the curving alley skirting the warehouse.

The undercover man went back into the depths of the doorway, retrieved the sack full of bills, stuffed them into a briefcase he had left with the slicker, and walked briskly back the way he had come. When he reached the first alleyway, he turned right, away from the bank. Five minutes later he was sliding behind the wheel of the Hispano.

The big yellow and black car was parked in a quiet cul-de-sac. Before he started the motor he opened the sack and counted the bundles of bills it contained. He had gotten away with \$22,850—no record-breaking heist

but enough to allow him to pose as a big spender at the tables during the next couple of weeks. He dropped the sack out of the window and packed the bills into the briefcase. Then he pressed the starter button.

He drove north toward the city on a crosstown highway. He had only gone a mile when two police cars passed him in the opposite direction. He heard the scream of brakes and the scroop of wet rubber on the road. In the rearview mirror he saw the two police cars skidding around in a tight U-turn to follow him. He stepped on the gas. Evidently the cops had descriptions not only of him but of the Hispano as well.

The eight-liter motor hummed and throbbed beneath the long, louvered hood as he pressed the pedal flat on the floorboards. The giant car leaped forward, its tires hissing on the wet roadway. He raced past Calumet Harbor with the gray waters of Lake Michigan on his right, turned left under the railroad bridge at Jackson Park and headed for Washington, the two prowling cars slowly receding in his mirror. A mile farther on the warehouses and factories, hamburger stands and gas stations gave way to houses and stores. The traffic on the road grew thicker. He was approaching a busy neighborhood shopping center.

The sidewalks were crowded, there were fruit and vegetable stalls laid out beneath glistening umbrellas by the curb; trucks and drays and delivery wagons clogged the street between the glistening car tracks. Farrell cursed and braked, spun the wheel and accelerated and braked again. Behind him the clanging of the police gongs grew louder.

He cut in between two street-cars, swerved past a horse-drawn dray loaded with sacks of coal, and narrowly missed a head-on collision with a yellow cab. Then he hit a stretch of clear road and gunned the motor again. The needle on the speedometer was hovering around the seventy-five mark when he saw, over the silver flying stork emblem surmounting his radiator, the

traffic signals at a main intersection ahead. He was less than a hundred yards away when the *stop* semaphore swung up and the light changed to red.

Farrell braked momentarily, felt the wheels begin to go, released the pedal, and then—realizing he could never stop in time—blipped the accelerator, declutched, shifted down, and decided to go through with it. He hit the intersection just as the traffic held back by the lights on the cross street was released. Brakes squealed over the furious honking of horns as the Hispano plunged in among the flood of vehicles converging from either side. Farrell leaned his hand on the horn button, trod on the brakes again, and wrestled with the wheel. The arc of clear glass swept by the windshield wipers was suddenly filled with the angular shapes of cars shooting past in every direction.

Even then he might have made it, if one of the Hispano's back wheels hadn't caught in the wet groove of a street-car track. The cabriolet lurched, slewed sideways, and then spun around with tires screeching as the rear end broke away. Farrell sat helpless behind the wheel while the intersection whirled dizzily past.

The Hispano side-swiped a street-car, skidded between two brewery trucks, and then shot across the greasy roadway. Crowds screamed and scattered as the heavy auto mounted the sidewalk, slammed against a length of iron railings bordering an area, and then bounced back into the road to cannon off a lamppost and turn over on its side.

Farrell found himself clinging on to the buckled wheel with broken glass showering all around him. He was shaken but unhurt. Pushing open the driver's door that was now above his head, he grabbed the briefcase and dragged himself out. The police cars were zigzagging toward him through the traffic stalled all over the intersection, the clamor of their gongs drowning the shouts of the crowd and the hiss of steam from the Hispano's burst radiator. One of the wire-spoked front wheels was

still turning as the undercover man dropped to the ground.

A scarlet Model-A roadster with whitewall tires rocked to a halt beside the wrecked cabriolet. 'Quick!' the driver shouted. 'Jump aboard!'

Farrell leaped for the running board without thinking. Hanging on to the door with his free hand, he crouched down low as the roadster jerked forward. The driver arrowed between the two police cars at the moment when the semaphore changed to *go*. He roared across the intersection and headed west before the rest of the traffic had started moving. By the time the prowling cars had swung around to follow them, he was three hundred yards ahead.

Clambering over the door and dropping into the passenger seat, Farrell looked more closely at his rescuer. A tall boy of about nineteen with curly hair; a college boy type. Something about him was vaguely familiar, but . . . ?

'Thanks, kid,' he panted. 'That was real friendly. I don't—'

'Bill Lardner,' the boy cut in with an amused glance at his passenger. 'I've seen you around at the Persimmon.'

Farrell moved a long black leather-covered case that had fallen against his knee. 'Of course!' he exclaimed. 'The trombone player with the band!'

'Home in one,' the boy said, shifting down to dodge past a street-car. 'Saw your little argument with the law, so I guessed I'd better lend a hand. Too bad about the auto: that was some jalopy you had there.'

'Yeah. I hope you know what you're doing. Those flat-feet could start shooting if they got within range.'

'They won't,' Lardner said confidently. 'This buggy's been breathed on by the hottest mechanic in Calumet City. What did you do?'

The undercover man grinned. 'I just robbed a bank,' he said.

'No shit!' There was admiration tinged with excitement in the boy's voice. 'Better get you out of here fast, then!'

Farrell looked at him curiously. 'Why? Why not turn me in and collect a reward?'

'Hell, I couldn't do that! Client of the joint. You're almost like one of the family.'

With a tearing-calico rasp from its exhaust, the hotted-up roadster surged forward along a clear stretch of road. Gradually, as the needle swung around the dial toward the eighty mark, the police cars fell behind. Farrell peered back through the circular mica window in the soft top and then turned back to Lardner. 'Ok, so we get away,' he said. 'But there can't be too many scarlet Model-A's with whitewall tires and hotted-up motors around. Won't the cops check it out and get on to you? Aiding a felony carries a pretty tough rap.'

The trombone player laughed. 'I should worry. I'm trading her in for a Stutz this P.M. I'm on my way to make the switch now. Let the dealer have the headache: he's railroading me enough on the price.'

Lardner drove fast and expertly, using every gap in the traffic flow to increase his lead on the prowling cars. Once or twice when they were blocked in dreary suburban streets choked with local delivery trucks the distance shortened, but the police were never closer than a dozen vehicles behind, and by the time they hit a wide, looping highway skirting the steel works and refineries east of Marquette Park the Model-A was a quarter of a mile ahead. The rain was falling more heavily now, driving people off the streets, slanting down to drum on the roadster's hood and blur the windshield more quickly than the wipers could clear it, as they raced toward the city center with wide fans of water spraying up from their spinning wheels.

The boy let Farrell off near the Union stockyards, slithering the Ford to a halt by a high blank wall masking a row of factory chimneys. The undercover man

slammed the door and leaned in over the open side. 'Thanks, kid,' he said. 'I won't forget it. Be seeing you around.' He waved a hand and ran across the road to vanish down a passageway between two warehouses. The scarlet roadster shot forward and broadsided into a narrow side street on the far side of a railroad bridge, before the police flivvers roared past in the direction of the Loop.

Farrell emerged from the alley, turned up the collar of his slicker, and hurried over the bridge. It was a desolate landscape that met his eye. Under the lowering sky, oil storage tanks, blast furnaces and huge concrete converters towered above the shining wet gray roofs lining the embankment on the far side of the freight yard beneath the roadway. A solitary locomotive puffed up and down between the long lines of box cars waiting on the tangle of tracks rayed out from a roundhouse like the strands of a steel spider's web. The moist air was heavy with the sweet stink of rotting hides and the stench of sulphur. He shivered and quickened his pace.

Ten minutes later he was sitting in the back seat of a cab on his way back to Burnham.

Seven

'I own the police.'

JOHNNY TORRIO

'A one-legged prohibition agent on a bicycle could stop the beer in the Loop in a day . . . if he were honest.'

PATRICK ROCHE, State's Attorney's
Chief Investigator, 1926

'You can't convince a Sicilian that the police, the courts, or the law are on the square. There is no faith in justice, only in the fixer who will talk to the judge.'

HELEN A. DAY, of the Little Sicily settlement

They came for Bruno Farrell the same afternoon. He had just ducked out of the hotel to buy a paper—GRABS 50 G'S IN LONE HEIST, the headline said—and they surprised him in the cigar store, half a dozen bulls and a detective-sergeant in plain clothes. If you call brown and white co-respondent shoes, an ankle-length leather coat and a brown derby plain. They found the gun hanging over the back of a chair in its holster in his room, but they didn't find any \$50,000, although they tore the place apart and even slit up the linings of his suits.

So they handcuffed him and ran him back into town in a meat wagon, and soon he was sitting in the Hanson

Street precinct house again, looking at Lieutenant Mulligan and another man. This was Captain Terence O'Mara, large and smooth and pink-faced, with sandy eyebrows and crinkly reddish hair oiled back over his round skull. O'Mara smelled of expensive toilet water. His slate-colored shantung jacket was draped carefully over the back of his chair. He wore a cream silk shirt with a monogrammed pocket under his open vest. There was a gold watch on his freckled wrist and a diamond stickpin in his Saks tie. 'All right, Faroli,' he said in his soft Irish voice. 'Just make it easier on yourself and tell us where you stashed the dough.'

'I don't know what you're talking about,' Farrell said for the tenth time. 'I don't even know why you pulled me in. I got a permit for the gun.'

'And we're doin' ballistics tests on it,' Mulligan said sourly. 'They'll be compared with the slug we dug outa the ceiling of the bank, bud.'

'Bank? What bank? Did somebody knock somebody off in a bank?'

The lieutenant stared at him with a puzzled frown. 'I don't get it,' he said at last. 'Look, you were *recognized*. The bank guard saw your mug before you pulled up the mask. Another guy watched you run across the street. One of the tellers. When the mask was off again. Then there was the sergeant you fooled with the slicker in that alley. You'll be put up for identification. All those guys will finger you, man. It's open and shut. You're only wastin' time with this crap.'

'None of that makes any sense to me at all,' Farrell said.

O'Mara stood up and came around from behind his desk. He stood at one side of the chair in which the undercover man was sitting, his manacled hands in his lap. Mulligan moved in close on the other side. A desk lamp was shining on Farrell's face. 'Are you telling us,' the police captain demanded, 'that you weren't in Burnham this morning? . . .'

'Sure I was in Burnham. I'm staying at a hotel there. You know that.'

'... That you didn't stick up the Illinois State Bank and get away with \$50,000? That you didn't make your getaway in a yellow and black foreign auto and switch to a red Model-A roadster, driven by an accomplice when the other car was wrecked? When you were seen entering the goddam bank, leaving it, and in both automobiles? Are you dumb enough to expect us to swallow that?'

'So you found the Hispano, then?' Farrell said.

'Ah!' O'Mara leaned down and thrust his face close to the undercover man's. 'Now we're getting some place. So you admit you were there?'

'Somebody swiped the car during the night,' Farrell said calmly. 'I'm glad you found it.'

'Oh yeah? You can tell that to the marines! If it was stolen, why didn't you report the theft to the police?'

'Because I don't have any faith in the police, that's why. They say the police in this town are a lousy bunch of crooks, no better than the hoods they're supposed to put behind bars,' Farrell said.

O'Mara slapped him heavily across the face. 'You see what I mean?' Farrell said.

They moved in on him and started the alternate question routine. 'Come clean, Faroli,' Mulligan snapped. 'Where did you hide the dough?'

'Who was your accomplice?' O'Mara grated.

'Why did you give the dough to him?'

'How did he know where to pick you up?'

'Where's your minder now?'

'How did you get back to Burnham after you'd ditched him?'

'What was his name?'

'Where did you contact him?'

'Who put you up to this?'

'Who are you working for?'

'Why choose that bank?'

'Why choose that guy? What's his name?'

'Where did you stash that fifty grand?'

'If I know anything about banks,' Farrell said with calculated recklessness, 'that's probably an exaggeration. They probably lost something more like... twenty-two grand.' There were a few questions of his own that he'd like to shoot. Like why were the cops expecting him? How had they known what car he'd be driving *before* he pulled the raid? They must have done, because nobody had seen him get into it, yet they'd turned and given chase as soon as they saw the Hispano on the street. Finally, how had they gotten to the right hotel so quickly without even knowing his name? Princey? And if so, why? Could she have told McGrath and then *he* tipped off the police? It looked as though Farrell's plan had left him further away from the truth than ever.

'So you do know,' O'Mara breathed. 'Ok, we'll pin this on you if it's the last thing we do. Lieutenant—get on to the FBI. Faroli, Bruno. Ask for Bertillon measurements. Prints. Call ballistics and tell them to hurry on those tests. Get the witnesses brought in for a line-up. Put out a call for this red Ford. Tell Sergeant Brody to tear that wrecked car apart.'

When Mulligan had left the room, the police captain sat on the edge of his desk and stared at Farrell. He hooked his thumbs through the armholes of his shantung vest and pulled out blue elastic suspenders, stretching and relaxing them as he spoke. 'Look, Faroli, you're an intelligent guy,' he began.

'I didn't mean to be,' Farrell said.

'Don't be a sap,' O'Mara went on, ignoring the interruption. 'Play ball with us and we'll play ball with you—as far as we can. We *know* you stuck up that bank. It'll not be but a few hours before we can prove it. Why not come clean and make it easier for yourself?'

Farrell said nothing.

O'Mara passed a pale fat hand over his face and then

clasped the back of his neck. 'This is a tight little town,' he said. 'We don't go too hot on freelances horning in. The hoods and the law, we know each other pretty well in Chicago.'

Farrell's eyes were fixed on the policeman's diamond stickpin. 'So I see,' he said meaningly. 'You might almost say intimately.'

O'Mara's face reddened. A vein like a blue worm pulsed in his temple. 'By God, I'll not stand for a punk like you muscling in on my territory,' he said thickly. 'I'll throw the goddam book at you. I got friends. I'll see to it personally that you get sent up for a long stretch.'

'You and who else?' Farrell jeered. 'Just assuming I *had* pulled a bank hold-up, just assuming there *was* fifty grand . . . or, let's say, twenty-two . . . how much would it cost to fix a *nolle prosequere*? Ten percent? Twenty?'

The Irishman shot up off the desk and stood over him with his fist raised. Then his arm dropped to his side and he swung away. 'We could of talked business,' he choked, 'but you have to—' He broke off abruptly as there was a tap on the door and Mulligan entered.

'This just came through,' the lieutenant said excitedly. He laid a slip of paper on O'Mara's desk. 'It seems there was a Bruno Faroli in that jail-break a coupla weeks ago. They caught the others but he's still free. A hold-up man. The description fits and—' In his turn he paused in mid-sentence. The unlisted phone on O'Mara's desk was ringing.

The police captain dropped into his chair, unhooked the receiver, and held it to his ear. 'Yeah,' he said, leaning forward to speak into the mouthpiece. 'O'Mara here. Who is this, please?'

His eyebrows raised and he slumped back in the chair, holding the instrument wedged against his chest. 'Frank! How's the boy? . . . Fine, thanks, fine. And the missus. And how's Rachel? . . . Sure I will. What's that you say?' He sat up straighter and glared at Farrell over the desk.

'Yes, we did, a while ago... Right here this minute!... What? He says what?... Well, for Chrissake why wasn't I told? Why didn't someone tip me off?... How'm I supposed to know, at all?... Yes, of course, Counsellor. Right away... Just as you say, Frank. Just as you say... No, I guess not. That's just a formality. But make sure the writ's here tonight, huh?... Ok, ok. I will. So long, Frank.'

He hung up the phone slowly. 'That was Goldberg,' he said to Mulligan. '*Habeas Corpus*. We're to let this bird fly at once.'

The lieutenant had listened scowling to the one-sided conversation. 'Chief!' he burst out. 'Surely, with what we have on him, you're not going to—'

'Shuddup, Mulligan. You know the rules,' O'Mara said.

Mulligan turned on his heel without a word and strode white-faced from the room.

O'Mara stood up and swabbed the back of his neck with a silk handkerchief. 'You got friends in high places,' he said grimly to the bewildered Farrell. 'Why didn't you tell me you were covered, you bastard? You could have gotten me into big trouble. Now get the hell outa here, and don't come back.'

Farrell was freed from the handcuffs, and then collected his belongings and signed for them in Mulligan's office. The newspaperman, Jason Mettner, was there, sitting in a wooden chair tilted back against the wall. 'What gives?' he asked, flipping a cigarette from a torn-open pack into his mouth.

'Counselor Goldberg, that master magician, just pulled another of his celebrated illusions,' Mulligan said bitterly. He fed a stick of gum into his wide mouth and chewed. 'Now you see him, now you don't! We had a crime; we had evidence, witnesses, proof; we even had a criminal. Now all we got left is the crime—and that'll probably turn out to be an illusion before we're through. Just another case of mistaken identity!' He sighed and

turned to Farrell. 'As for you, I don't get it. You're a stranger in town and already the big guns fire for you. So why do you have to mess with small-time stick-ups? You got brains in your head, yet you louse up your reputation associating with cheapskates and shysters. How come? You can do better than that, I can tell.'

Mettner lit a cigarette and blew a plume of smoke at the ceiling. 'Bruno, my boy, I concur,' he said without looking at Farrell. 'There's something about you. You don't fit. This ain't your bag and you can't tell me otherwise. What the hell are you doing, fouling up your life this way?'

Farrell would dearly have liked to confide in them both—two honest guys, as it seemed, in a world of corruption. But he remembered George Stevens. *Trust nobody in Chicago. Nobody.* 'Ah, go peddle your tracts in Holy Trinity,' he said contemptuously. And he turned and left the office.

There was a Cadillac sedan parked at the foot of the steps leading to the sidewalk. As the undercover man ran down and turned up his collar against the rain that was still falling, the rear door opened and two men got out. They wore belted Melton topcoats and pearl-gray fedoras. In the gathering dusk, light from the lamps over the precinct house entrance gleamed wetly on the blued steel automatics in their hands.

'Inside, buddy,' one of them said curtly, gesturing with the gun toward the padded interior of the car. 'The boss would like a word with you.'

Eight

'A mafioso is polite, reserved, disciplined—a difficult, and therefore recognizable, rule of conduct in a volatile Sicilian. He lives modestly, no matter how great his wealth; he eschews ostentation; he is abstemious, church-going, and a kind and attentive husband and father . . . In this private, esoteric morality he does no wrong even when he kills, violates and bleeds other humans. If he abides by the precepts of "Omerta" he is, to himself and his brethren, in grace.'

KENNETH ALLSOP, *The Bootleggers*

'If there ain't no witnesses, there ain't no case.'

ALBERT ANASTASIA, of Murder Inc.

Roberto Gatta and Joe Venice were typical Syndicate hoods, sloe-eyed and sallow, with fleshy, blue-chinned faces and blank, expressionless stares. Venice was short and compactly built, Gatta taller and leaner. Under his expensive topcoat, each wore a double-breasted gray striped suit with a black shirt and a white tie. Pale spats and black calf shoes completed the ensemble.

In the front of the sedan which drove Bruno Farrell away from the Hanson Street police station were Big Louie Coppolano and Frank Fingers Palucci, who drove. These men, Farrell knew, were very different from, and far more deadly than, the roughneck thugs of McGrath's mob. Yet the tingle of fear that had quickened his pulse

and raised the hairs on the nape of his neck when he was kidnapped was seasoned with a thrill of anticipation: it would be too much of a coincidence if this latest development was not connected with his unexpected deliverance from the hands of O'Mara. The boss who wanted a word with him must therefore be the man who had instructed his lawyer to put pressure on the venal police chief. And if the undercover man's hunch was correct, that was going to be one of the Syndicate big shots. . . .

Why would such a man trouble himself to spring Farrell and then send four torpedoes to bring him in? Surely because he was interested in him as a possible recruit! It wouldn't be worth the trouble if it was just a question of a one-way ride—not when Farrell was already on his way to jail; not unless the mysterious boss happened to be called McGrath. And Farrell was certain he wasn't: the style of his abductors proved that.

They were efficient, ruthless—and polite. As Farrell sank back on the cushions of the Cadillac under the menace of their automatics, Gatta reached in between his lapels and tweaked the revolver from the agent's holster. 'The hands on the knees, please,' he said in Italian. 'And be very careful that you move slowly.'

Farrell was very careful that he moved slowly. Joe Venice patted him all over and then nodded briefly at his companion. Satisfied that their prisoner was carrying no supplementary artillery, the two gunmen holstered their own weapons and sat back with folded arms.

The sedan was twisting through deserted back streets. In the gathering dark, the gas lamps cast long streamers of yellow light on the wet roadway. Farrell had no idea where they were, though he suspected it was somewhere near the lake shore. 'Where are you guys taking me?' he asked. He figured it would be smart to talk Italian too. That way his captors could vouch in at least one way for his authenticity.

'The boss wants to see you,' Gatta replied.

'Yes, but I don't know who the boss is,' Farrell said. 'Which outfit do you boys work for?'

'No talking,' Joe Venice said. His voice was as soft and expressionless as Gatta's.

The car crossed a main thoroughfare bright with rush hour traffic and then plunged into a maze of back streets again. They passed factories, mills and engineering works, skirted a park where the turning leaves hung motionless and dispirited on the trees in the rain, and then rolled down a broad avenue into a residential district. The driver turned into a curving parkway lined with maples. Big houses stood back from the road on either side, and below the lawns sloping away on their left, Farrell could see an occasional gleam of water.

The Cadillac swung into a cul-de-sac and stopped outside tall iron gates set in an ivy-covered wall. Fingers Palucci honked three times. The gates swung open. A barrel-chested man with a shotgun in the crook of his arm peered through the side window and then waved them on. They swept up a wooded driveway and stopped under a portico set in the center of a sham colonial façade. 'Ok,' Gatta said. 'Go on in ahead of us. Slow and easy.'

Followed by the two hoods, Farrell climbed the steps and pushed open the massive oak door. There was a wide curving staircase on the far side of a huge lobby. Standing between the marble balusters on the red carpet halfway down was a wide-shouldered man in a tuxedo. Four more sprawled behind newspapers on Empire chairs beneath the blaze of chandeliers below. They could have been stamped from the same mold as Venice and Gatta.

Farrell was taken up the stairs, along a broad corridor, and into another wing of the house. Gatta tapped on a door, opened it, and motioned him in. He was aware of a big shadowed room lined with bookshelves, a desk islanded in a pool of light from a stan-

dard lamp, and a spare man of about sixty, with a lined face, hooded eyes and crimped gray hair behind it. Then Gatta said: 'This is Faroli, Mr. Sanguinetti.'

The undercover man's pulses leaped. The deal was paying off! Salvatore Sanguinetti was one of the Capone-Torrio area bosses, head of one of the most feared and ruthless Syndicate gangs, and a mafia *capo* into the bargain! This was just the kind of contact he had been angling for!

'Sit down, Faroli,' the gang boss said, indicating a single ladderback chair in front of the desk. 'I want to talk to you.' His voice was as dry as the rustle of wind over dead leaves.

Farrell sat down. Gatta and Venice stayed in the shadows and leaned their backs against the door.

'You knocked off a bank today,' Sanguinetti said. 'In Burnham.' It was a statement and not a question. He glanced down at a slip of paper on the desk. 'For \$22,850. That's peanuts—but friends of mine don't like it that banks should be held up in their territory. Even for peanuts. Didn't it occur to you that maybe that bank was paying for protection? That the guys taking money for that protection might object to some freelance busting in?'

Farrell said nothing. The questions seemed rhetorical, and he didn't want to commit himself to a line of behavior until the interview had established some kind of direction.

Sanguinetti looked straight at him for the first time, the hooded eyes smoldering beneath heavy brows that were many times darker than his silver-gray hair. 'The people I'm talking about,' he said, 'they need peace and quiet. But if guys are going to stick up banks, then the cops are going to poke their noses in everywhere, mess people around, start off a panic in the speakeasies and saloons, turn over places they're paid to leave alone—all because some citizens who don't like their dough heisted will be on City Hall's tail to get it back. And if the law

starts leaning on people seriously, it's going to cost the people I'm speaking of very much more than the money they lose in some two-bit bank raid. Or a hundred two-bit bank raids.'

Farrell dropped his gaze like a naughty schoolboy and stared at his knees.

'So that money has to be returned,' Sanguinetti said. 'Then there's another thing. You been making yourself conspicuous around town. Riding around in a flash automobile, wearing flash clothes, loudmouthing in bars. Also you roughed up an enforcement man in some opposition dump.'

'I don't go too strong on Irishmen,' Farrell said. 'Especially when they try to push me around over some dame.'

'That I understand. But we have a kind of truce running in this town right now. I wouldn't want the opposition they should think we're aiming to break it. And it just so happens that in looks you could be one of us.' The gang boss picked up a paper knife and held it with the point digging into one index finger and the tip of the handle against the other. 'Where were you born, Faroli?' he asked softly in the Sicilian dialect.

- 'Castellammare del Golfo.'

Sanguinetti nodded. 'It's a good area. A lot of our people come from there. When did your folks come over?'

'With the big migration in the 1890s. They're both dead now.'

'We know you did the diamond exchange job,' Sanguinetti said. 'But nobody ever heard of you before that. How come?'

'I was in Texas and out on the Coast. Small-time stuff, but I like to work alone.'

The gang boss shook his head. 'That ain't smart,' he said. 'Not when you could get brothers to help you along. In our kind of business, twice the number of guys means four times the turnover. Frank Goldberg, my mouthpiece, he calls it the law of increasing returns.' He

flung the paper knife suddenly at the desk, so that the point stuck in and the haft vibrated, and then pushed back his chair. 'I got a proposition to put to you,' he said.

Farrell tried to keep the excitement from his eyes. 'Yes, Mr. Sanguinetti?'

'Like I say, there's things against you. You talk too loud and you act too loud. You could be a nuisance. Ordinarily, a guy like you horns in, I have him rubbed out. But you, you have the right background. You seem to have some talent for survival. And to tell the truth I can always use extra muscle in the enforcement department. That's why I had you sprung. So here's what I propose: either you return that money and come in with us and accept my authority . . .'

'Or . . .?' Farrell prompted as the dry voice fell momentarily silent and the seamed face became thoughtful.

Sanguinetti looked up. 'Or you take a little ride with Joe and Roberto here. It's up to you.'

The undercover man grinned. 'That's what the British call Hobson's choice,' he said. 'Mr. Sanguinetti, I'd be happy to accept your offer.'

'Ok,' the gang boss said, suddenly brisk. 'A thousand a week. With bonuses. One hour's shooting practice and one hour's workout in the gymnasium every day. No jobs pulled on your own. And you stay here until my boys are satisfied your face fits. Now—where did you hide the jack?'

'In a safe place,' Farrell said.

'How long would it take you to lay your hands on it?'

'Depends how far out of town you are here. Maybe an hour.'

'How much do you have left?'

'I haven't touched a cent,' Farrell said. 'The bills are still in the bank wrappers.'

'That's good. We can say it was a mistake. Where is it?'

The undercover man hesitated. 'There was a young guy helped me out,' he said finally. 'A musician works out of the Persimmon at 35th and Calumet. He picked me up when my auto was wrecked.'

Sanguinetti nodded. 'The red Model-A.'

'Right. He plays trombone. While he was watching the road, trying to outpace the cops, I stashed the bills in his instrument case. There's kind of a little cubbyhole in there—a space with a lid that closes up with a piece of tape and a button on top of the plush. It's for spare mouthpieces, oil for the slide, and suchlike. Only he don't use none. So I stuffed them in there and buttoned it up.'

'Why, for Chrissake? Why take the chance? Was he in on the deal?'

'Uh-uh. He just happened by. I did it because something smelled. The cops were waiting for me. They even knew what auto I'd be driving *before* I pulled the stick-up. I figured I had to unload the jack before they caught up with me . . . and I was right: they showed at my hotel just after.'

'Well, don't look at me,' Sanguinetti rasped. 'We didn't hear about it until they'd pulled you in. How were you going to lay hands on the loot again? Suppose this punk gets wise to the fact that he's hoisting twenty grand in his trombone case?'

Farrell shook his head decisively. 'He won't. I've watched him on the stand. He spits on the slide and he's only got one mouthpiece. He's no reason to open that lid. In any case I was going around to the club tonight to collect, maybe give the kid a couple hundred for his trouble.'

Sanguinetti's long, thin, old man's fingers smoothed the sandpaper of his chin, one side and then the other, the lined face tilting. 'The Persimmon. That's on McGrath's circuit. I wouldn't want to bust in there in case he thought we was trying to pull something.'

'McGrath doesn't know I'm tied up with you,' Farrell

pointed out. 'They're used to seeing me around there. I'd be waiting there when the kid arrived. No problem.'

'Be your age, Faroli,' the gang leader said coldly. 'You won't be going alone. You think I'd let you out of here without insurance?'

Farrell tried to ignore the chill that ran up the nape of his neck. He said nothing.

Sanguinetti's fingers drummed on the desk. 'You happen to know where this bird lives?' he said at last.

'Calumet City. I memorized the address from the license on the steering post of the car.'

'That's the first smart thing you've done. What time does the punk start in at the Persimmon?'

'Around nine. I guess he'll go home first. He traded in the Ford for a new auto this afternoon. He's freaky about cars. He'll be showing it off.'

Sanguinetti shot the cuff of his mohair jacket and looked at his gold watch. 'You got time. Joe, Roberto—take Faroli down to this kid's place and see the dough gets back here as quick as possible. You boys know what to do.'

'Ok, boss,' Joe Venice's voice said quietly from the shadows by the door. Sanguinetti pushed back his chair until he had withdrawn from the circle of light cast by the standard lamp. The audience was over.

As Farrell and the two hoods stepped out of the big room into the corridor, a girl hurried down toward them from the stairhead. The undercover man stared as she tap-tapped on high heels along the marble floor. She was worth a stare. She was tall and dark and rangy, with small, tiptilted breasts peaking a flame-colored silk dress loosely belted around the hips. Her hair was black and wiry, shingled up from the nape of her neck and cut in a bang across her forehead. She had hot black eyes over a good nose and a sulky mouth. Her knees were dimpled and her calves and ankles were beautiful.

She was trouble.

Farrell sensed it as soon as he caught her eye. She

noded at Gatta and Joe Venice and came right up to him. 'So you're the guy Sal was talking about?' she said huskily. She gave him a cool level stare and then swept her hot eyes deliberately from his face to his knees and back again. 'If I'd been Captain O'Mara, I wouldn't have let you go!' she said.

'If you'd been Captain O'Mara . . .' Farrell began impulsively. Then he checked himself and said: 'I kind of got the impression I wasn't Captain O'Mara's type.'

The girl smiled. She had even, startlingly white teeth. She laid a hand flat on his chest and ran the fingers up under his lapel. 'Very nice. That's a nice piece of stuff,' she drawled. 'What do they call you when you're out of jail, lover boy?'

'I wouldn't repeat it in front of a lady,' Farrell said. 'The name is Faroli. Bruno Faroli.'

Her fingers tapped him lightly on the cheek. 'Nice to have you with us . . . Bruno,' she said. She turned and went through the doorway into Sanguinetti's room.

Farrell was still gazing after her when the door closed. 'Who in hell was that?' he asked softly.

'Silvana Montessori. She's kind of close to the boss,' Joe Venice said. 'If you know what's good for you, you'll look the other way.'

'C'mon. Let's get goin',' Gatta said.

The Cadillac was waiting under the portico with Palucci at the wheel. This time Gatta sat beside the driver and Farrell was left alone in the back with Venice. Half an hour later they were cruising down a long suburban street flanked by identical rows of three-storey red-brick houses with sandstone facings. The undercover man saw the rakish lines of the Stutz gleaming in the lamplight, when they were still a hundred yards from the Lardner home.

Palucci coasted the sedan to a halt with its front fenders almost touching the empty circle of the Bearcat's whitewall spare. As they opened the doors, an elderly

man and woman came out of the house. The woman climbed into the passenger seat of a Model-T coupé parked in front of the Stutz. The man cranked the motor to life and then got behind the wheel and drove away. 'Going to the movies,' Gatta grunted. 'Swanson's playing at the neighborhood theater. I saw the bills as we drove through.'

Bill Lardner opened the door himself. He frowned when he saw the wide-shouldered figures of the two gunmen, and then his face cleared as he recognized Farrell. 'Well, come on in!' he enthused. 'Boy, this is a surprise! I sure am glad to see you got away with it!'

'These are two friends of mine,' Farrell said. 'Sorry to trouble you, but I have a favor to ask.'

The boy's good-natured face creased into a smile. 'Any little thing,' he said, leading them into a neat parlor. 'Say, did you see the Bearcat? Isn't she a whizz!'

'Great. Just great. That's a real smooth auto you have there. Bill—you know that instrument case you had in the Model-A . . .'

'Almost ninety on the parkway coming back!' Lardner said proudly. 'And the steering! You have no idea! . . . Instrument case? You mean my trombone garage?'

'Yeah. I guess so. Look—would you mind getting that case? I . . . well, I slipped something into it when you weren't looking. In case I was nailed by the flatfeet. My friends here just gave me a ride so's I could stop by and pick it up.'

Lardner looked bewildered. 'Why, sure,' he said uncertainly. 'I . . . I'll go get it right away. It's in the closet under the stairs.' He left the room. Gatta followed him and stood leaning against the doorpost as the boy opened a smaller door in the hallway.

Farrell looked around. Under the pendant gas light he saw a polished table with a pot of ferns; wine-colored moquette easy chairs with white lace antimacassars on either side of a fireplace stuffed with a fan of pink pa-

per; an oak dresser with plates. There was a Currier and Ives engraving on one brown wall and a Dresden shepherdess on the mantel.

Bill Lardner was back in the room with the trombone case. 'Right here,' he said. 'Say, can I offer you guys something? My folks just went out and I have to leave for the club in ten minutes, but there's a bottle of gin in my room and—' He broke off with eyebrows raised as Joe Venice took the case from his hands and snapped open the clasps.

'It's ok, Bill,' Farrell said. 'It's . . . well, it's kind of their property. In a way.'

Venice laid the trombone on the table and opened the lid of the inner compartment. As the young musician's eyes opened wider and wider, he drew out the thin bundles of \$100 bills and stacked them beside the case. Lardner burst out laughing. 'Gee whizz!' he exclaimed. 'And I never knew! If I'd of realized, I could have bought that goddam Stutz for cash!'

'Thanks, kid,' Joe Venice said. He held out his hand.

Lardner clasped it—and raised his eyebrows again as the gunman gripped him by the elbow with his free hand. Firmly.

It was only when he saw the boy, in a rather embarrassed way, try to free himself, and fail . . . only when he saw Gatta's hand plunge between the revers of his top-coat . . . that the full horror of what they were going to do exploded in Farrell's mind.

He opened his mouth to protest. He took a half step forward. A dozen thoughts churned in his head, a dozen ideas clicked into place with brutal clarity. Lardner knew that he had robbed the bank. Now the boy knew that he was associated with Venice and Gatta. The gunmen were known to be Sanguinetti's bodyguards. So Lardner could tie the gang boss in with the hold-up . . . and that just mustn' happen. He remembered the Syndicate credo: no witnesses mean no case. And he heard again the rasping voice of Sanguinetti. *You boys*

know what to do . . . Fury and disgust and impotence choked him. *The law is greater than the individual*, Stevens had said. *Suppress your own conscience for the greater good . . .* But an innocent boy—a kid who'd only tried to help him! It was monstrous! He was unarmed in the face of two ruthless killers. But he couldn't let it happen: he had to do something . . .

The Dresden shepherdess erupted in a shower of tiny fragments that tinkled to the tiled fireplace. Before Farrell had formulated his decision, while his mouth was opening and his foot was still in mid-air, Gatta had fired the .38 automatic four times.

Held fast by Venice's steely grip, Lardner took the heavy nickel-jacketed slugs between the shoulders and in the back of the head. While the echoes of the shots were still ringing in the small room, he slammed forward into one of the armchairs, twitched convulsively, and then slid to the floor and flopped over on his back. Blood soaked the front of his tee-shirt and striped the ruin of his face from the two terrible exit wounds torn by the bullets. There was blood too sprayed over the white antimacassar, and the glass of the Currier and Ives was starred.

Eyelids fluttered in the gory mask of Lardner's face. Gatta placed the muzzle of the automatic against his temple and fired again.

Swallowing his rage and nausea, Farrell turned away, trying not to think of the wasted life, trying not to imagine the elderly couple, elated perhaps after their visit to the movies, excited and proud of their son's new car, returning to open the door . . . *Do anything necessary to avoid your cover being blown*. He took a deep shuddering breath. *You boys know what to do . . .*

The look of betrayal in his young rescuer's dying eyes was to haunt him for the rest of his life.

Nine

'A colony of unnaturalized persons, feudists, blackhanders and members of mafia, aided by gangs of American citizens . . . have formed a super-government of their own in Chicago which is levying tribute upon citizens and enforcing collection by terrorizing, kidnapping and assassination. Many of these outlaws have become fabulously rich as rum-runners and bootleggers. They are working in collusion with the police and other officials building up a monopoly in the unlawful liquor business and dividing the territory among themselves under penalty of death to all intruding competitors.'

PETITION TO CONGRESS praying for Federal action and relief in Chicago, signed by Edward L. Williams, Dean of the John Marshall Law School, and Dr. L. Williams, Director of the Law Enforcement for Better Government Association, on February 28, 1926

We took one of the tourers [Fingers Palucci said to a friend in the Four Deuces later that night], because the boss figured the Caddy would be too . . . well, too flash. It was just a regular milk round. Telling half a dozen saloon keepers hello over on the border near Cicero; booking orders; leaning on three guys who are stepping outa line nearer town. You know.

Well, I'm 'tending to the heap in the garage just before we leave—checking the gasoline, loading in extra ukuleles for the typewriters, and so on—when the boss himself comes in. I never seen him down there before. 'Fingers,' he says, 'I want you to do something for me. There's a new soldier coming with you boys tonight,' he says, 'and I'd like it for you to keep an eye on this bird. Nothing special, just the usual run-down. But Roberto and the others will be kind of occupied, so I'd appreciate it if you was to let me know how the guy shapes up,' the boss says. And he tucks a couple of C's into my shirt pocket before he scrams. Very good that way is Mr. Sanguinetti.

Well, of course it's this character we picked up outside the precinct house the other day. Name of Faroli. And by the looks of him he's a wop all right. Kind of a goodlooking guy: the others call him Pretty Boy. But he's tough and he's built and he makes with the language, so that's ok. He sits in back with Roberto and Joe, and Big Louie's up front with me.

First off we call in for three, four races at Washington Park. Then we start on the round. There's nothing to watch at the first few joints, so I stick behind the wheel. But after that we come to the first of the guys who are stepping outa line, so I figure here's where I follow the boss's orders and mosey along. It's a crummy dump around Crawford and West 55th, on the edge of the Saltis-McGrath preserve. Roberto and Joe breeze in with the typewriters, and Big Louie and the new guy follow up with their rods. I leave the motor running and make it as far as the door.

There's two or three punks in there who beat it as soon as they see the boys come in. And that leaves just the owner and a kid behind the bar. Of course they start sweating when they see what the wind blew in. But Joe and Roberto junk the Thompsons on a table and go up to the bar, while Pretty Boy and Big Louie cover them from the door. 'Jeez, but I gotta thirst on me,' Joe says,

real polite. And then he turns to Roberto and he says: 'Maybe you could use a drink too, Roberto,' he says. 'What'll it be?'

'Well, I figure maybe I could go for a beer,' Roberto answers. And Joe turns to the kid and asks for two beers. By now the owner's sweating like Niagara, but the kid draws the beer and Joe takes one sip, and then he throws the tumbler on the floor and he makes like he's real sore. 'What the hell is this?' he asks the owner. 'I bring my friend in for a drink, and you insult him by serving him dog-piss. What kind of a lousy dump is this anyway? You used to have regular beer in here,' he says.

The owner's so scared by now he almost wets his pants. But he says the beer's ok: it ain't his fault if Sanguinetti can't give him protection and some strongarm man from the McGrath mob forces him to buy from them. So Joe says ok, if the beer's so good, then drink some yourself and prove it. And they pick this palooka up and dump him on his back on the bar, and they stick a funnel in his craw and they pour about three gallons of beer into him. Then they call in Big Louie and Faroli. And Louie picks the guy up and puts a Nelson on him, and while he's holding him there Pretty Boy hauls off and pastes him one in the gut. Jesus, it sinks in right up to the elbow! And of course the owner, a big fat slob he is, the owner throws up!

'What did I tell you?' Joe says to Roberto. 'This beer ain't fit to drink! It even makes the guy who sells it puke!'

Big Louie's still holding him. And they rip off the guy's pants, and they put a bucket under his belly, and Joe gets out a knife and he presses the point in just above the guy's cock and he says: 'I could go a bundle on tripe and onions tonight. I'm gonna slit your goddam belly and spill your guts into this pail, so help me, and eat them while they're hot!' Man, I near busted my own gut laughing! This fat guy's hollering and blubbering

and yelling for mercy, and then Joe puts the knife away and lets him go. 'Ok, just this once,' Joe says. 'But next time I come in here,' he says to the guy, 'I wanna be able to get a glass of good beer. You know where to order it,' he says. Then Joe and Roberto set the Thompsons on rapid and they spray the bar and the shelves and the barrels while the fat slob and the kid drop behind the counter, and they all come out laughing while the liquor's spewing out over the floor.

The next guy's tougher. Much tougher. It's a classier joint too—on West 52nd near Sherman Park, stashed in behind a soda fountain. The four boys go in and start turning over tables and chairs to introduce themselves, and then Pretty Boy takes out his gat and herds the customers over in one corner while Roberto talks to the proprietor. Me, I'm propping up the doorpost like before.

'Listen, you two-timing bastard,' Roberto says. 'What the hell's the idea, crossing up my boss and buying your liquor from someone else?'

Now the owner of this joint has a face like a Mack truck and he's built up strictly from the ground. 'Get the hell outa my place, Gatta,' he says. 'You know West 52nd is McGrath territory, so go peddle your wop coffin varnish someplace else.'

Roberto says, speaking kind of reasonable, that the line runs down the center of the street. McGrath to the north, the boss to the south. And being as how the joint is situated on the south side, then they must get their liquor from us. So the guy starts yelling blue murder. McGrath only charges him \$50 a barrel for his beer, he says, and the boss takes \$60. Furthermore, he says, McGrath's beer is better, not being needled the way ours is, and he's damned if he is going to take an inferior product, and shell out more for it, and sell out the clients. In fact this guy is taking a mighty tough line, and his bartender, who is about twice the size of Big Louie and muscled with it, is beginning to look ugly too.

So Roberto says that's just too bad, but the guy takes

Syndicate beer or else. And he and Joe take out their rods. At which the owner of the joint starts hollering about there ain't no justice.

'Well,' Roberto says, 'I never give the matter much thought, because personally I never have too much occasion for that commodity. But,' he says, 'you may be right at that. Which don't alter the fact that you're gonna buy our beer, you tricky sonofabitch.' And he slaps a clip into the heater.

At this moment Pretty Boy, who must have eyes in back of his head, notices the bartender making a dive for a gun beneath the counter. He yells at Joe, and Joe drills the bartender between his eyes as neat as you please before the guy can take a sight above the bar. After that things kind of move. The owner makes a run for it, hollering how he will not give in to threats. He is trying to get in among the clients, figuring the boys will not shoot up ordinary citizens even to get at him. But Pretty Boy drops him on the way past with as pretty a right cross as I ever see outside of the Garden. And then he picks him up and throws him back to Big Louie.

They beat the shit outa the slob and toss him over the bar, and then they start to break the place up. They smash the bottles and drill the barrels and overturn all the slot machines and one-arm bandits. Then Joe takes a typewriter and does the mirrors they have there all around the room, above the customers' heads. And while they're all shrieking and yelling, Roberto sends me out to the heap for a couple of axes.

Pretty Boy goes into the cellar and near drowns himself splitting open the casks with one. And Big Louie takes the other and chops up the chairs, the tables and the bar while Roberto and Joe slash the covers off the ritzy seats this punk has installed along the wall. I tell you that place looks like the San Francisco earthquake by the time we're through with it! Finally Roberto wakes up the owner and says to him like this: 'If this dump ain't fixed up and sellin' Syndicate liquor one

week today,' he says, 'there ain't gonna be no place to sell any liquor in—and there ain't gonna be no proprietor to sell it.' Then he kicks the guy in the guts, like to make a full point. Period. And we all take a powder.

Big Louie don't talk too much, but on the way to the third joint he says two things. He says: 'Boy, I enjoyed that!' And he says to Joe: 'How about this truce then? I mean like rubbing that bartender out,' he says.

Joe thinks for a minute and then he says: 'The truce is for not bumping off hoods from rival mobs. That guy may have been a racketeer but he wasn't no hood, so it don't apply. Anyway,' says Joe, 'it was self defense.'

There ain't much to say about the last place, because somebody musta put the word about and there was already a reception committee waiting for us. It's under the el over on Halsted where the boundaries ain't defined. And as soon as we walk in, we see we're expected. There ain't no clients, and there ain't no proprietor. Just Hymie Loeb, Hofner and Mullowney rising up from behind the bar with typewriters in their mitts. Pretty Boy is going in first and the mick lets out a yell. 'What, you again!' he hollers. And then—*Bam!*—the Thompsons open up and the lobby is fuller of lead than a one-winged duck!

The boys drop down behind the hat-check counter and return the fire. And Faroli's hat has enough holes punched in it to take him all the way from Cicero to East Randolph on the el! Then some smart-ass puts out the lights and Roberto figures it's time to leave. He don't want to get involved in no shooting war without the boss's ok. Not with some mob from the other side.

I've left the motor running and we make a smooth getaway. By the time those punks are out on the sidewalk, we're half a block on and they don't even touch a fender. We drive straight home and the boys make their report and later the boss comes down to the garage and asks me how the new soldier makes out. 'He did all right,' I say.

Ten

Al Capone contributed \$260,000 to the Big Bill Thompson election campaign at the end of Dever's administration; and there was a queue of policemen, civic officials, prohibition agents, judges, politicians and high administrators every week at the Metropole Hotel to receive the \$30,000 distributed as hush-money. But not every public official could be bought. Police Chief Morgan Collins rejected an offer of \$1000 a day to ignore Torrio's activities. E. C. Yellowley, prohibition administrator for Illinois, turned down a quarter of a million dollars in return for the abandonment of closing-down proceedings against the Cragin distillery. US District Attorney William F. Waugh refused a \$50,000 bribe to drop prosecution of a group of Torrio men accused of Volstead Act violations. Elmer J. Irey, the Federal tax investigator whose team finally sent Capone to jail, was offered a million and a half dollars in cash against a pardon for the big shot. That, too, was refused. But these men were the exceptions proving the rule. And it was the same at the lower end of the scale.

Farrell sat up in bed and reached the hip flask off the night table. Outside the window, early autumn sunshine bronzed the leaves blown off the sycamore by the wind from the lake. He tilted the flask and swallowed. 'Boy, that was good!' he enthused. 'I really needed that!'

Princey Hartz pushed a bare foot against his calf. 'Booze!' she said. 'That's all you guys ever think of!'

'I wasn't talking about the liquor,' Farrell said.

'Then that's the only other thing you ever think of.'

'Are you filing a complaint?'

Princey nuzzled her face against the hard flesh of his shoulder. 'Don't know yet. I'd like to test the quality of the merchandize again before I decide.'

He put the flask back on the table and moved in the bed. 'Always happy to oblige a lady,' he said. 'We like our clients to be satisfied.'

'Satisfied?' Princey said. 'Oh, God! Oh, Jesus, the things you do to me, honey!'

Later she stretched her soft, supple body and murmured: 'Maybe I could do with a drink myself now.'

Farrell picked up the flask and shook it. 'This one's dead,' he said.

'No problem. I got a quart of rye in the clothes closet.'

He lay on his back with his hands laced behind his head and admired the rich curves of her silhouette as she bent down in front of the window and rummaged among the beads and sequins. 'This is the real McCoy,' she said, bouncing back to the bed with a squat, dark brown bottle. 'Dig up in Mr. Seagram's own backyard. It came off a load the Touhy gang was running into Des Plaines from Canada—only McGrath's boys happened to show up on the lakeside with some heat, so it got kinda diverted.' She giggled, lowering her head to bite playfully at his shoulder. 'You don't know it, sweetie pie, but you helped it to get here!'

'Me?'

'Who else, baby? Remember the night we met?'

'It would take a lot of this to make me forget,' Farrell said, commandeering the bottle and unscrewing the cap.

'Well, you came in with a little redhead. Maisie. And Maisie handed me an envelope, remember?'

Farrell nodded. 'A . . . letter from your sister, as I recall?'

Princey laughed. 'Some sister! Maisie works the Four Deuces and she knows how to keep her ears open. She makes a little on the side as a runner for Teddy. Because of the truce there's no more hijacking of regular deliveries from the breweries and alky-cooking plants in town. But every time she gets wind of a freelance consignment coming in from outside—and there's plenty, because the big shots all like to drink the real thing—every time she hears tell of one of those, she passes the word along to McGrath. Only she does it through me, so nobody can tie Maisie and her Syndicate contacts at the Deuces directly in with Teddy.'

Farrell whistled. 'I get it. No wonder she wanted an escort!'

'Yeah. Anything gives her a reason for dropping in the club, like she's with some spender he's showing her the town, that's good.' Princey sat up suddenly and looked into his eyes. 'Talking of escorts, you're wacky to come here without one yourself. I hope you know what you're doing.'

He reached for her and drew her close. 'By me, I'm doing pretty good,' he whispered into her hair. 'But it's ok. I'm a big boy now. They let me out alone. It seems I tested high on the milk run the other night. I get to quit school with the others.'

'I didn't mean that. I didn't mean you'd be in trouble with your new boss. I meant . . . well, Pat and his mob.'

'Princey,' Farrell said, 'why did you tip off the flatfeet? About the bank stick-up?'

She stiffened in his arms. 'You . . . you knew . . . it was me?'

'It couldn't have been anyone else. Not with them knowing about the Hispano before I'd pulled it. If it'd been McGrath—if maybe you'd told them and *they'd* squealed—they'd of lifted the jack off me first. But why, Princey? Why?'

Suddenly he was looking at a warm, smooth, naked back. 'To keep you outa harm's way, you big dope,' she

said in a muffled voice. 'You're such a crazy guy . . . such a loopy character . . . You don't know. Those are real mean bastards. You were practically on the spot. They hate your guts. At least I figured you'd be safe inside—until the boys cooled down and the heat was off. I'd of gotten you out again, honest. I got my hookups too. But you . . . you were so all-fired set on . . . on becoming . . . a goddam martyr . . .'

'Baby,' Farrell said gently. 'Don't cry. Please. I ain't sore. I ain't mad at you. It's ok. I just wanted to know.' He dragged himself over her and forced her on to her back again. 'You and me, kid—it's ok, isn't it?' he said.

Princey sniffed. 'They do say,' she murmured, 'that a gentleman takes his weight on his elbows.'

He rolled over on to his back and pulled her on top of him. 'That's jake with me,' he said, 'but get a load of the Faroli touch: this gentleman's gonna take *your* weight on his elbows.'

Her hands played with the hair on his chest, slid lower. 'The Faroli touch?' she said. 'You mean . . . like this?'

'Oh, no!' Farrell groaned. 'Ladies and gentlemen—I give you Miss Princey Hartz: the gal who won't take yes for an answer!'

'I tell you I saw him go in there,' Maisie Worth said into the pay phone mouthpiece. 'Sure I'm sure. About a half hour ago . . . Of course I know the guy. He two-timed me at the Persimmon a couple weeks back, the sonofabitch. *You* should remember that.'

She listened for a moment and then said: 'Look, Pat—I know Wacker Drive like my own backyard. Of course it's her place. The one with the tree that's been fed on Teddy's gin. Like I mean it's half dead.' Again she paused while the tinny voice quacked in the ear-piece. Then she said: 'Don't ask me; just do something. Maybe it's because a girl don't like being stood up.'

She slammed the receiver back on its hook and mut-

tered: 'Beat the shit outa the bastard! Beat the shit outa both of them!'

'I gotta be getting back,' Farrell said. 'By six I should be skipping rope at the gymnasium.'

'You?' Princey said. 'The gymnasium? Don't make me laugh. It hurts.'

'No kidding. The boss likes us to keep in shape. Maybe he knows what we do with our spare time.' Farrell took another swallow from the rye bottle and set it on the night table. 'Say, this stuff *is* good! The genuine brown velvet scorch! When did you say the next consignment was due? . . . And seeing as how I'm asking questions, when can I see you again?'

'The two could be answered as one, honey. Maisie was here with a letter for my sister just before you showed. I shouldn't be tellin' you this, but seein' it's for us . . . The Aiellos have fixed a deal to take over a truckload of French brandy that some loner knocked off from a bonded warehouse in Quebec. Teddy figures it'd look better on his shelves. The switch is on Thursday, out at Highwood, in Lake County. So Pat'll be away all night Thursday. Ok?'

'Thursday it is,' Farrell said. 'Pick you up at the Persimmon, huh?' He reached for the bottle and drank again. 'Princey, I wish to hell . . . Look, I know how it is, but I wish to hell you'd kick the habit.'

'Habit? What habit?'

'The Mullowney habit. You're worth something better than that punk.'

'When I get a better offer . . . ' Princey said.

'You know what I have to offer,' Farrell said. 'You want me to raise my offer?' He swung an arm behind him without looking and replaced the bottle on the table. A hand with chewed fingernails picked it up.

Princey screamed.

'Now ain't that nice?' Mullowney sneered. 'Just baby

and me, an' a bottle makes three. That's real intimate.' He was standing beside the bed with the rye in his hand. Hofner and Loeb stood in the doorway. They were carrying guns.

'Pat,' the girl said quickly, 'you don't understand.' She scrambled from the bed and reached for a robe. 'It was just that—'

'Shuddup!' Mullowney strode forward and snatched the garment savagely away from her. He put the bottle on the boudoir table and unbuckled his belt. 'You dirty little whore,' he said. 'You stinkin', lousy, cheap little slut!' He pulled the belt from the loops at the waistband of his pants and began lashing her with it. 'I'll teach you . . . to two-time me . . . with some . . . mother-fuckin' . . . two-bit wop . . . you cocksuckin' . . . little tramp!'

Princey fell screaming to the floor, the white flesh of her belly and breasts and buttocks crisscrossed with livid red weals. Rats Hofner's small eyes were glistening. A cigarette jutted from between the knuckles of his clenched free hand. He raised the fist to his mouth and sucked in smoke. 'Give it to her, Pat,' he shouted. 'Beat the shit outa the cow!'

Farrell moved on the bed. His gun was in its holster, slung over the back of a chair on the far side of the room. Hymie Loeb strode forward and pistol-whipped him across the face with the barrel of his automatic. Farrell collapsed on the pillows.

Mullowney turned away from the naked, writhing girl and threw the belt on the floor. 'I'll finish with you later,' he said. 'Right now I have something to say to lover-boy here.'

He stared at Farrell's bleeding face and said: 'Punk, is it? Kick the habit, is that the way of it? Well, let me tell you something, boyo: Mister McGrath is after forbidding me to kill you . . . this time. It's only the second warning to stay away from me and from my girl. But, by God, by

the time I'm through with you, you'll be wishin' it was the third! You'll be wishin' he'd changed his mind and allowed me to rub you out, I'm tellin' you.'

He picked up the half-full bottle of rye by the neck, and smashed it against the edge of the boudoir table. Broken glass and liquor cascaded to the floor. 'For a start,' Mullooney said, 'I'm thinkin' it might not be a bad idea to mark up that pretty face some, so you ain't such a pushover for the girls.'

Still holding the bottle-neck, with its collar of splintered glass, he moved toward the bed.

Farrell woke up with a sore throat all over his body. Inside his head it was dull and empty. Without thoughts. He felt as though he had been asleep for several years. But the sore throat bothered him: he ought to suck a lozenge. Otherwise it might get worse; much, much worse.

The sun was very bright. It hung from four brass chains in the center of a white sky, hurting his eyes. He lay on his back and stared at the sun, wishing for rain. He moved his right arm to shield his eyes from the glare. Something heavy was hanging on to his arm.

Bedclothes?

He spread his fingers and touched himself. Coarse flannel pajamas, county hospital pajamas, rough material that hurt his skin wherever it touched, and it touched all over. He was sweating. He shouldn't be lying out here in the sun wearing only pajamas: he might catch cold. He had a sore throat already—or was it just the county hospital flannel chafing his neck?

He began to remember who he was, and sweated some more. Fearless Farrell, scourge of the hoods. You too can be an undercover agent and help your Federal government. Earn good money on the side. Just mail your check for our correspondence course. Six easy lessons, for a dollar seventy-five extra we send you flannel pajamas complete with sore throat to fit.

He raised his hand and touched his throat, the side of his face. Pain lanced his skull but his fingers only felt more coarse flannel. The hand was no good. It must have come with the six lessons. He'd read it somewhere: mail-order hands. No substitute for the real thing.

His head was swathed in bandages.

Relief, in a way: he never did like insensitive fingers. He drew a deep breath. Butchers' knives sliced through him from shoulder blades to chest. The sweat soaked into the bandages. He wished a cloud would cover the sun: it was far too bright. Then he remembered: they'd sent him eyelids with the undercover kit. Hinged at either side of the nose. He closed them, and the sun set in a crimson sky.

When he opened his eyes again there were three suns hanging in the sky. The bright one receded and the others advanced to hover in the air over the hospital bed. Farrell blinked, screwed up his eyes, and then tried to focus. Two faces—one thin and dark, the other with a mouth exactly like the mail slot in someone's door. 'He's coming round,' Lieutenant Mulligan said.

'You thought that yesterday,' Jason Mettner said. 'But it was a bum steer.'

Farrell licked his lips. His tongue swept over the edge of a bandage. 'Jesus,' he said. 'I feel like I was run over by a beer truck.'

'You look like you was run over by a beer truck,' Mulligan said. 'They put twenty-three stitches in that gash up the side of your face. You got two shiners, a broken nose, three cracked ribs, and what it says here on your temperature chart is multiple contusions. Which is to say somebody beat the bejusus outa you.'

Farrell tried to smile. It hurt too much and he filed the idea away for action at some future date. 'Maybe I *was* run over by a beer truck,' he offered.

'Yeah. Question is—who was the driver, Faroli? Who was the driver, bud?' Mulligan pulled a chair out from beside the night table and lowered himself into it. Mett-

ner sat on the other side of the bed. 'You was found naked in an alley back of the Union stockyards, in the early hours of Tuesday morning,' the lieutenant said. 'Besides the beatin', you'd lost a lot of blood and you was sufferin' from exposure. You damned near croaked. If the patrolman who found you hadn't known somethin' about first aid, you would've.'

'Tuesday morning? What is it today?' Farrell asked. *Princey?*

'Wednesday afternoon.'

Farrell began to give a sigh of relief, but the butcher knives came out again, so that scheme too went into the pending tray. 'Thank God,' he said carefully. 'I have a date Thursday night.' *If she was still alive.*

'You must be kidding.' Mulligan unwrapped a stick of gum, made a special delivery into his mouth, and hitched his chair closer. 'There's just one thing I want to know,' he said. 'How did it happen?'

'I was skipping rope to keep in shape and I tripped.'

'Wisecracks I can do without,' Mulligan said tiredly. 'You proved you were tough already. Do I have to wait until I sit one side of a cold storage drawer in the morgue before I get anything outa you? Sanguinetti's mouthpiece sprang you from jail. Which of his enemies beat you up?'

'Nobody beat me up. I told you—'

'Yeah, yeah. You slipped on a king-size banana skin. You punks make me sick to my stomach,' Mulligan said.

There was nothing in that for Farrell. He let it go with the tide.

The policeman chewed in silence for a moment. 'It may seem a screwball thing to you,' he said at last, 'but I'd like to make this the kind of city where what happened to you didn't happen to people.'

'Your sentiments do you credit even if the syntax doesn't.'

'There you are, you see!' Mulligan said to the news-

paperman as if he'd just gotten up from his knees to find the collar stud had been on the dressing table all the time. 'I told you! That ain't no hoodlum talk! This guy *don't* belong here! This is an educated guy!'

'Sorry, Jack,' Farrell said. 'That one kinda slipped out.'

Mettner lit a cigarette. 'I'm writing a piece,' he said dreamily. 'Anatomy of a hood. Inside a man who's inside the illegal liquor business. From the inside. Only you don't fit any place. That's what intrigues me. There must be some level where we can reach you.'

'Get in on the ground floor,' Farrell said. 'It's the best way. Dale Carnegie says so.'

Mettner blew a plume of smoke over the bed and then hastily fanned it away. 'The lieutenant's an equally rare bird in this city,' he said. 'He's an honest cop. He'd like to put the guys who did this to you behind bars. And all the other guys like them. I have a hunch. I just don't believe you're the kind of man who wouldn't agree with that. Why don't you give him a little encouragement—like an identification and some testimony?'

Mulligan was still chewing. Farrell's head jerked toward him. 'Does he give a good yield?' he said to Mettner.

'Come again?'

'Milk.'

The door of the room opened and a nursing sister in a starched uniform looked in. 'I said five minutes,' she announced sternly. 'And you *must not* smoke in here!'

Mulligan shook his head disgustedly. He pushed back his chair, rose to his feet, and walked out. Mettner looked once more at the cocooned head on the pillows, then shrugged and followed him. They left the door open. Through a window on the far side of the hospital corridor, Farrell could see the roofs of the City Hall and County buildings, and beyond them the gold-leafed spire

of the Methodist temple, the Loop skyscraper church on the corner of Clark and Washington. Suddenly he felt very vulnerable and very much alone.

Half an hour later, Roberto Gatta and Joe Venice arrived with a private ambulance to take him back to Sanguinetti's home.

Eleven

It was a pushover, that booze racket, I'll tell the world—for the guys in on it! There was more than ten thousand speaks in the city, each buying six barrels of beer every week at \$55 the barrel. That grossed the bosses three and a half million a week. Then each speak bought around two cases of liquor a week at \$90 the case. Which put another \$1,800,000 in the till. It cost them \$4 a barrel to make the beer, and \$20 a case for the liquor. You see what I mean? Of course they ran in cargoes of the real stuff from Canada and along the East Coast from Cuba and Europe. But most of the bootleg hooch was homebrew. Volstead allowed the manufacture of 'cereal beverages with an alcoholic content of not more than half of one per cent'—what you and me call near-beer. I don't have to tell you what happened. The boys got licenses for this, and then spiked the product. It was that easy.

As for the liquor, that was a laugh! The Gennas got government ok for the manufacture of industrial (heh, heh!) alcohol. Plus they ran this tenement network of alky-cookers—portable stills dumped in the kitchens of poor families, sometimes a hundred to a block. They even imported families from Italy and Sicily to run them. They paid \$15 a day, and all the family had to do was keep the still stoked and strain off the sugar-corn liquid. The raw moonshine was collected each week, and then they cut it, flavored it, colored it, bottled it with fancy

labels and—presto—Whiskey, sir? Gin? Bourbon? I'm tellin' you, half the city stunk of fermentin' mash and malt! And it was supposed to be illegal! That was the biggest laugh of all.

Farrell healed quickly. They put him in a tower room overlooking the lake, and kept him in bed for three days with his ribs strapped up. Silvana Montessori brought him his food and changed the dressing on his face, and on the third day she allowed him to take the bandages off. The scar Mallowney had inflicted with the broken bottle ran from just beneath his left eye to a point under his chin—a jagged, purplish gash still scabbed and puckered from the sutures clamping the raw edges of the wound together. The doctor called in by Sanguinetti said that it might respond to cosmetic surgery and it might not: it was too early to tell. Farrell looked at the ruin of his face in the mirror and shuddered. He could remember nothing after Hymie Loeb had pistol-whipped him.

On the Thursday morning, he had tried for the first time to carry out his orders and mix it. He had graduated alpha plus on the first stage: he had been recruited by a Syndicate gang; now he had to maneuver them somehow into conflict with the other side. And there was already a weapon in his hand.

He had been playing poker in his room with Big Louie, Palucci, Gatta and Joe Venice. When he had allowed them to win enough off him, he pleaded tiredness and Big Louie and the driver left. Farrell eased himself back on to the bed. 'How would you boys like to make some dough?' he said to Venice and Gatta.

'Everybody likes to make dough,' Gatta said expressionlessly.

'Right. I had a deal lined up for tonight but I can't make it now on account of I'm sick. I'd of needed some extra heat anyway and I was going to cut you guys in

on a three-way split. The way it's fallen, I'm offering you the whole story for ten percent of the loot. What do you say?"

"What's the story?" Joe Venice said.

"There's a Canadian heisted a truckload of bonded liquor that he's selling to the Aiellos. The takeover is tonight at Highwood—but McGrath's been tipped to the deal and he's planning to hijack the load. I figured it might be a good idea to bust in and take it off McGrath."

"You crazy?" Gatta said. "Pull a deal like that in this town when there's a truce agreement in force? On McGrath and the Aiellos? You'd never find a buyer—if you lived long enough to try."

"I'm not aiming to try. The merchandise would never come near this town. There's nothing that could tie us in with it if we kept our noses clean. I got contacts with the Purple Gang: I was figuring on selling in Detroit. As for the truce—well, it's not as though this was a scheduled run."

The two hoods exchanged glances. Farrell waited with apparent indifference. If he could tempt two Syndicate torpedoes to antagonize two of the most powerful North Side mobs, it would be almost more than he could hope for!

The hope had a happy life, but it was short. Venice shook his head decisively. "Uh-uh. No freelance operations without the boss's say-so. Anyway he'd never agree—not when it meant hitting the Aiellos."

"I wasn't planning on asking. This was a personal deal. I worked it out before I met him."

"You oughta know better than that," Gatta reproved. "We got rules."

Farrell didn't know whether the hoods reported his proposition or not. But Sanguinetti himself came to see him later that afternoon. The old man stood looking out the window with his hands loosely clasped behind his back. It was the first time Farrell had ever seen him on

his feet. He was surprisingly short. Judging by the authority radiated from behind his desk, Farrell had expected something only slightly less tall than the Standard Oil building on Michigan and 9th. Also he limped slightly.

'Friends of mine,' Sanguinetti said, staring out at the lake, 'are concerned that one of my boys is tangling with a broad she's hitched up with a McGrath man.'

Farrell said nothing.

'Ordinarily I don't mess with the private lives of my boys,' the gang boss went on. 'But in this case I don't advise it. I don't advise it at all.' The back of one hand was slapping softly into the palm of the other. He turned around and looked directly at Farrell, the hooded eyes bright in the seamed face. 'Ordinarily,' he said again, 'I would expect a mob beat up one of my boys the way you was beat up, they should pay for it. But not this time.' The harsh, dry voice paused for a moment and then went on: 'Like I told you once before, the people I'm speaking of they want peace and quiet. And it *was* Mullowney's moll.'

'Was?'

'Is. They tell me she sings at the Persimmon again. Only she wears a lot of make-up and she don't do no strip just yet. For the moment, I think it would be smart you stayed away from that place.' He nodded once and limped from the room, his hands still clasped behind his back. The general had issued his orders.

It was dusk when the door opened again and Silvana slipped inside. Farrell was lying in bed watching the light thicken over the lake. He turned his head in surprise: the dressing was usually changed late at night. 'Hi, baby,' he said. 'I wasn't expecting you so early.' He sat up and reached for matches. The gaslight bracket was just over the bedposts.

'I didn't come to fix your face,' Silvana said. 'I was feeling lonesome. Fingers has driven Sal to the Metropole for some big-time parley, and the others have

taken off on the milk route . . . No, leave it be. I kind of like it when it's almost dark. Romantic, huh?"

'Yeah.' Farrell replaced the matches and regarded her warily. Sanguinetti's mistress had the boss's ear—among other things. So it was smart to keep in with her. In, but not in up to the neck.

She moved forward and stood by the window. She was wearing a yellow satin robe trimmed at the neck, wrists and hem with ostrich feathers of the same color. Beyond her the red and green navigation lights of steamers pricked out the darkening surface of the water. Farrell was seeing the red ones large.

'We're all alone in the house,' Silvana murmured. 'Just you and me—and of course the two gorillas at the gatepost.' She laughed softly and put up the hand nearest Farrell to pat the short, wiry hair springing darkly from the nape of her neck. Highlights slid over the dull gleam of the satin as flesh moved loosely up under the robe. He saw, as he was meant to see, that she was wearing nothing beneath it. The stop semaphore clanged up reinforcing the red light.

'Silvana . . .' Farrell began. 'Baby . . .'

She moved swiftly across and sat down on the side of the bed. She bent towards him and he could see between the edges of the robe the lean curves of her breasts. Her eyes were shadowed but her teeth gleamed in the dusk. 'They'll be gone several hours,' she said.

Farrell could feel the heat of her thigh against his leg through the covers. 'Silvana,' he said again. 'You're . . . Mr. Sanguinetti . . .'

'He's an old man, Bruno. There are times a girl feels like tasting red blood. You know what I mean? I go for you, honey. You know that too.' Cool fingers touched his face. 'You must know that.'

'Me too, baby. Me too.' Farrell was sweating. He cleared his throat. 'Only one thing. There's kind of a problem.'

'Problem?' She leaned back. Now he could see the eyes

glinting in the half light.

'The guys that beat me up, they didn't fight by no Queensberry Rules,' Farrell said. 'Like I mean they didn't stop at the belt.'

'Jesus!... You wouldn't be taking me for a ride, would you?'

'That's the last thing I'd want to do,' Farrell said fervently.

She rose suddenly to her feet and whisked aside the covers. 'Holy God!' she breathed. 'They sure did you good, didn't they? You poor guy!'

He staged a sigh. It was painful but he had to do it. 'So right now, you see...'

Silvana stooped and kissed him gently on his bruised mouth. 'I'll take a rain check,' she said.

When she had gone, Farrell pursed his lips in a soundless whistle of relief. That hurt too, but he figured it was worth it.

A week later, Sanguinetti sent him into town to escort Silvana on a shopping expedition. He himself was back in the Metropole, attending a conference of bosses called to raise the price of beer from \$60 to \$65 a barrel.

Twelve

'The intersection that Chicago calls the world's busiest corner, State and Madison . . . the rush hour, when the downtown skyscrapers begin disgorging their 400,000 occupants; when streams of humanity sluice willy-nilly through the Loop—harried commuters for suburban trains; fagged shoppers with fretting children for elevated stations; pretty typists and salesladies, fresh as daisies after their day's work, bound for dinner and a movie, maybe, or for the four walls of a cheap room and a gas-plate snack; sly-eyed fashion-plate loiterers and standees at corners and in doorways, bound for nowhere and no good, birds of prey and passage; respectable clerks, brokers, professional men, and bankers hurrying to the club or favorite speakeasy for an ante-prandial cocktail; newsies screeching their loudest; autos honking their maddest; traffic coppers tootling their sharpest. Babel and kaleidoscope.'

F.D. PASLEY, *Al Capone*

They had lunch at Diamond Joe Esposito's Bella Napoli café, where the talk was all in Italian and the steamy air savory with the aroma of garlic, herbs and osso buco. They drank a bottle of something that was labeled Barolo and capped it with what the waiter assured them was genuine Strega, and then they went out into the Loop and joined the dense crowds thronging the

sidewalks in the early autumn sun. There was still a strip of plaster covering Farrell's scar, but apart from a stiffness in his limbs and a pain in his strapped-up ribs if he breathed too deeply, the worst effects of his beating had passed. Silvana clung on to his arm, chattering gaily, and steered him through a succession of department stores, modistes and hat shops, gathering packages as she went. She had laid off the flirty manner and she made no reference to her play for him the week before. Maybe, Farrell thought, it was something to do with the stars. Or the moon.

Once when they were passing a small hotel near Dearborn station, she squeezed his arm and said: 'File away that address for some future afternoon, Bruno. They got the most comfortable beds in town in there.'

He looked into the hot black eyes. She was wearing a purple cloche and a silver fox, and her lean face was intense in the frame of velour and fur. 'For you, baby,' he said politely, 'an afternoon is far too short.'

At a quarter of four, he left her at a beauty parlor near the Congress Hotel, promising to collect her in a couple of hours. He would spend the time shooting pool with some buddies over on Quincy Street, he told her.

He treated himself to three shots of rye in a State Street speakeasy, walked two blocks crosstown to Mike Hinky Dink Kenna's cigar store at 311 South Clark, and went in back to make a phone call. Then he threaded his way along the noisy, traffic-choked street and hurried up the stairs to the elevated station at La Salle and Van Buren. Six stops took him to Lake Street, and from there it was only a hundred and fifty yards to Wacker Drive.

The stone canyons separating the Loop skyscrapers were already in shadow, and the low sun hollowed the eyes of the brownstones fronting the warehouses along the river. Farrell ran up the steps and pushed open the door of the apartment.

She was standing by the window, a blonde Venus sculptured in wine-colored crêpe-de-chine. An ocelot coat

sank its claws into the back of an armchair. 'Hiya, babe!' Farrell said. 'That didn't take me too long?'

'Well, look who's here!' said Princey. 'Didn't we meet some place before? In some crummy club maybe, around 35th and Calumet? Or was it two other suckers? I have so many gentlemen friends I sometimes forget.'

Farrell thought she was kidding him until he saw her eyes. 'I checked that you were ok,' he said. His hand rose to his face. 'You saw what they did to me. I couldn't do no more.'

'You could of called.' She turned her back on him. 'Over a week ago.'

'It's kind of like a jail, where I am. I'm watched all the time. They don't have pay phones in the passageways, and there's always some gorilla by the house phones. Or Sanguinetti. This is the first time they let me out.'

'That must be nice for you. Did you enjoy your lunch? They say the lasagne verdi's out of this world at the Bella Napoli.'

'Oh,' Farrell said slowly. 'So that's it?'

'Yeah,' Princey snapped. 'That's *it*, brother. Can I fix you a drink before you go?'

'Am I going?'

'By me, you already went. Anyway, I think perhaps you are in the wrong apartment.' She spoke to the sunny sky outside the window. 'Thursday, he says. I'll pick you up at the club. Ok, so he gets himself beaten up. Thursday's three strikes and out. So I'm worrying myself sick over whether he's alive or dead, and why no word. Then I'm walking through the Loop one day, and I take a gander through the window of the Bella Napoli, and what do I see?'

'Princey...'

'I see the guy himself, as large as life and twice as sassy, wrapping himself around a glass of vino while he pitches a woo at some black-haired bitch who—'

'Princey, that was the boss's daughter! I was *detailed* to take her shopping!'

'Says who?' She whirled around to face him, her eyes

blazing behind the mascara. 'So maybe now you work for a Mister Montessori?'

'Ok, ok—his floozie then. What difference does it make? The kid's nothing to me.'

'The way you were looking at her, you'd be a natural for that new song—"Your lips tell me 'No, no', but there's 'Yes, yes' in your eyes".'

'Princey, for Chrissake!'

'Right now, I'm more interested in my sake. It's crazy, but I kind of like to be able to believe the guys I hang around with.'

'Look,' Farrell said patiently, 'I did my best to check that you weren't hurt too bad. I was told you were still singing at the club. I couldn't contact you personally before today. I couldn't. I came here this afternoon to try and talk you into leaving Mullowney . . . to make a final effort—'

'You did say final?' Princey cut in.

'Sure. A final effort to—'

'That means it's the last time?'

'Yeah, I guess so. If you refuse this time, I won't ask again.'

'Promise?'

Farrell breathed hard. 'This isn't getting us any place,' he said. 'Where do we go from here?'

She turned away from him again and hugged her own shoulders as if she was cold. 'Out,' she said. 'As far as you're concerned. I wouldn't want to keep you: I'm sure you have plenty of interesting things to do in your new job. Do drop by the club with your friend some night—if you can find the time. We have private bedrooms on the third floor. You can hire them by the hour.'

Farrell picked up his hat and walked out of the apartment.

He collected Silvana from the beauty parlor, carried her packages to the car, and drove her home. They were stalled at the intersection of South Michigan and Roosevelt Road, blocked by the flood of cabs streaming

east to the central station, when she twisted in her seat to look through the rear window. 'I wonder who it is today?' she murmured.

He turned to follow her gaze. Bright headlamps and winking coachwork stretched as far as he could see. 'Come again?' he said.

'Who's tailing us,' the girl explained. 'Sal always puts a tail on me when I go out without him. He likes to keep his eye on the ball.' She laughed. 'It's kind of a protection . . . both ways!'

Farrell's foot slipped off the clutch pedal and the motor died. Horns honked impatiently behind them as crowds of home-going office workers swirled around the car. 'Jesus,' he muttered, 'this isn't my day!'

As soon as Sanguinetti was home, he asked to see him. Joe Venice showed him into the big second-floor room. The gang boss was sitting behind his desk unwrapping a cigar. Farrell figured he could lose nothing by coming clean: the tail's report would be on the desk already.

'Mr. Sanguinetti,' he said. 'I guess I should tell you: I stopped by Princey's apartment this afternoon while Miss Montessori was at the beauty parlor. I was there about ten minutes.'

Sanguinetti stripped the band off his Havana and then trimmed it with a gold cigar-cutter. 'So?' he said without looking up.

'I wanted to roll it up for keeps. Like you said. It's all off now.'

A match flared. The end of the cigar glowed, brightened. Smoke billowed out from the pool of light over the desk. Sanguinetti shook out the match and dropped it into an ashtray. He looked up. 'And is that all you have to say?' he asked.

'Yeah. I . . . uh . . . I guess so, sir,' Farrell said.

'Then you better go back to your room,' the gang leader said.

Thirteen

With all those guys, the bosses, the dons, the capos, it was like they was on the spot practically the whole time. They never stepped outside the door without bodyguards. At one time Capone had eighteen. When he went out in his armored sedan, there was always a flivver scout car ahead, acting like a destroyer with a warship. Behind came the tourer with the heavy muscle. At the Hawthorne Inn, the Syndicate's Cicero headquarters, there was a twenty-five yard passage leading to the lobby. When you walked down that corridor, your arrival was signaled by a buzzer—and when you got to the lobby you saw that every chair, every settee and lounge, the reception desk, the telephone switchboard and the cigar counter, were all placed to face the entrance. The idlers, with blue chins and newspapers they didn't read, were torpedoes; the bellhops the desk clerk and even the switchboard girl were all on the payroll. You stepped into a fog of cigarette smoke and a total silence. You could of cut them both with a knife... if you packed anything that old-fashioned.

In the Metropole Hotel downtown, Capone's fifty-room suite was guarded like it was a blockhouse. They had their own elevators, their own bars and kitchens, their own liquor cellar and even a private whorehouse for the bodyguards who crowded the anteroom outside the big shot's offices in rooms 409 and 410. There were steel

shutters over the windows and armed sentries patrolling the hallways every few yards. Torrio didn't let up even when the feds nailed him for running the Sieben brewery and he went to Lake County jail for nine months. He paid to have the steel screens around his cell and hired three ex-deputy sheriffs fulltime as personal sentries in the pen! I tell you, those musta been frightened guys!

Sanguinetti's house was almost as difficult to get out of, as it was to get in. All the doors had been bricked up except those beneath the portico and the pass door leading to the six-car garage, all of which were guarded day and night unless the gang was out on a special job. There were hoods in the lobby, hoods around the passageways, and hoods usually in the special poolroom Sanguinetti had built on the ground floor. The lower windows were barred, and there were men patrolling the walled grounds as well as guards at the gate.

From the inside, however, there was one advantage denied those outside the walls: you could check out the routines of the gangsters detailed to guard the place. Farrell had been doing this from the darkened windows of his tower room for over a week, before he made a secret sortie in the early hours of one morning a few days after his shopping expedition with Sanguinetti's mistress. He had failed with the direct approach to Gatta and Joe Venice in his first attempt to mix it; next time he must try something subtler. And apart from giving him his marching orders, Princey Hartz had also given him the germ of an idea. But first he had certain researches to make. And a burglary. And for these exploits it was vital that he was neither tailed nor known to have left the house.

A schoolboy again, Farrell arranged pillows and cushions under the covers of his bed to look like a sleeping figure, and stole down the stairway to the floor below. Earlier in the evening he had sprung the catch of a second-floor hallway window and satisfied himself that

it opened silently. It had the disadvantage that it was immediately opposite the door to Silvana's room . . . but it was the only one that led directly on to the pitched roof of the kitchen wing at the back of the house. From here he could use a stackpipe to gain the yard behind the garage. And then there was only fifty yards of shrubbery between him and the wall.

He eased up the sash a half inch at a time, and climbed out on to the shingles. He had ten minutes before the night man patrolled the hallway again. There was more time available between rounds, but this was the only way it worked in with the routines of the men in the grounds below.

Closing the window as carefully as he had opened it, he pussyfooted along the slant of roof above the guttering until he reached the stackpipe. The moon was full and the sky was clear; gables, chimneys, walls, buttresses and trees stood out against their dark shadows in the milky light as clearly as the cardboard cutouts of a toy village. He would have to take a chance on being spotted from one of the few windows at the rear of the house: he needed the illumination to make his hazardous journey in the short time at his disposal.

He swung himself over and began swarming down the pipe. The scrape of his feet against the stonework, the laboring of his breath and the metallic grating of nails and buttons against the iron tubing sounded thunderous in his ears, but no voice challenged him from below; no shot shattered the stillness of the night. He dropped silently on to a flower bed and flitted across the lawn toward the garage wing.

Farrell was wearing black sneakers, a black suit, and a black shirt with no tie. A dark fedora was pulled low over his eyes. He melted into a clump of ornamental shrubs, and then dropped and froze with his face to the ground as heavy footsteps clumped across the brick-floored yard behind the garage.

The footsteps stopped. Farrell held his breath. He heard the scrape of a match and then an exhalation of breath. The footsteps moved away and faded around the corner of the house. He could still smell the aromatic odor of the cigarette as he sped silently across the moonlit yard. Three minutes later, he dropped from the branches of an oak on the far side of the wall.

He had marked down a Buick tourer which was always parked outside a large shuttered house on the avenue, about a quarter of a mile from the gang headquarters. It took him only a moment to remove one of the mica sidescreens under the soft top and hot-wire the motor. Then he drove north into the city center.

He left the car a block away from a street whose name was burned into his memory: he had registered it through half-conscious eyes when he was driven away to be dumped in the alley outside the Persimmon after his first beating by McGrath's men. He remembered the house too—a tall, narrow building sandwiched between a seedy hotel and the offices of a trucking company. It was not, he knew, the Irish gang leader's headquarters: it was a place he used for the accounting side of his business, an office where the files and records of payments, extortions, graft and revenue from slot-machines, liquor and prostitution were kept. The trucking company next door provided a blind for his fleet of beer wagons.

Farrell glanced up at the blank windows in the moonlight. Roughneck hoods like Teddy McGrath would hardly keep the place covered at night, as a Syndicate boss would. All the same he figured a rear entry would be more prudent. He walked down an alley beside the hotel and found himself in a lane running along behind the buildings. On the way, he passed a poster flapping in the night breeze from a street-car stop. It advertised the Valentine Inn, on the Loop. GLADYS BAGWELL—*Retained By Public Demand*, the faded lettering an-

nounced. *Songs and Jazz at the Baby Grand!* Farrell smiled sourly. Public demand was good . . . when you knew that this was Antonio Genna's girlfriend!

The back of the McGrath building offered no problems to an agent trained in the expertise of secret entry. There were trash cans, there were outhouse roofs, there were stackpipes and broad windowsills and even a rusty fire escape. It took him ten minutes to reach the embrasure he wanted, lift away the circle of glass he had cut with his diamond ring, and reach inside to snap back the catch. He thrust up the window and climbed inside.

He pulled a knotted handkerchief up over the lower half of his face, tugged down his hat brim, and swept a pencil flashlight around the room. It was just as he remembered it: the desk, the filing cabinets, the door to the bathroom. Even the carpet still bore the ring of dark stains by the wall where Hymie Loeb had slugged him. There was a half-full bottle of scotch on the desk, an overflowing ashtray and a folded newspaper on an occasional table. The place smelled of brilliantine and cigar smoke.

Something was wrong.

The alarm buzzer in back of Farrell's mind was vibrating. His subconscious had noted something out of place and was signaling him to watch out. He stood very still, listening. Then he swept the beam of the flashlight slowly back over the ashtray, the paper, the bottle, the desk, the filing cabinets . . .

The bottle!

The surface of the amber liquor was swilling imperceptibly from side to side. Somebody had put that bottle down, plunked it hastily down, only seconds before. When they heard him coming through the window . . .

He continued the even sweep of the thin pencil of light around the room, as though he had noticed nothing. But now he was noticing everything. Especially the heavy drapes covering the bay window overlooking the street.

And the toecaps of the oversize brown shoes just visible beneath them.

So there *was* a night watchman after all! Farrell thumbed the room into blackness, unholstered his gun, and launched himself into the dark where the drapes had been. He aimed a kick just below a slight bulge in the invisible material. His foot thudded into something yielding. There was a gasp of pain. A heavy object dropped to the floor.

Continuing his advance, Farrell ripped aside the curtains and swept his hand over the electric switches he had seen by the door. The room blazed into dazzling light.

He was tall and massively built, and he needed a shave. He would always need a shave. He stood in front of the window with his mouth open and his hands clasped to the lower part of his belly, fighting for breath.

Farrell booted his revolver under the table, reversed his own Police Special in his hand, and danced back out of range as the big man lumbered out of the alcove after him. Once he let those gorilla arms wrap around him he would be finished. He ducked underneath a roundhouse left, slammed his fist into the giant's belly again, and then took a right cross on the shoulder that sent him spinning across the room to sprawl back over the desk.

Winded or not, the watchman was quick on his feet. Still grunting with pain, he hurled himself at Farrell with clawing hands. Farrell lay on the desk top, drew back his knees, and straightened his legs as the huge body hit his feet. The giant staggered away far enough for Farrell to spring upright. A huge fist crashed against his cheekbone with a force that seemed to split his skull apart—but by this time the butt of his revolver was already swinging in a short arc toward the big man's head. It clipped him behind the ear before he could punch again. He dropped face down on the floor with a thump that shook the room.

Farrell leaped astride his back and slugged him again.

Harder this time. The watchman had been struggling to rise. Now he subsided and lay still.

It took Farrell all of twenty minutes to locate the information he wanted. That was ok: it was evens that it wouldn't be there at all. Carefully he memorized routes, times, dates, amounts. Then he replaced the sheets of paper in their folder and slid that back into the filing drawer. What was equally interesting to him was a neatly docketed account of the hijack at Highwood the previous Thursday, including a carbon of McGrath's instructions to his drivers and the original pro forma invoice for the stolen brandy FOB Quebec. This he folded and put into an envelope. He would mail it to the Aiellos: they would be interested to know who was responsible for lifting the load they'd paid for!

Finally he jimmied open a black japanned petty-cash box and pocketed the thousand-odd dollars it contained. The unconscious giant on the floor hadn't seen his scared face, and it would be better if his visit were written off as an ordinary sneak-thief's raid.

Before he left he sat at the desk, picked up the phone and asked for long distance. When George Stevens's irritable, sleepy voice answered, he said slowly and distinctly: 'Faroli. Watch the papers tomorrow.' And hung up.

For a moment he sat drumming his fingers on the polished wood. Should he call Princey while he had the chance? He'd once kidded that she was a girl who wouldn't take yes for an answer. Well, he guessed he knew enough about dames not to take no himself! Give her time to get over her jealousy and she'd be eating out of his hand again. Well, maybe not quite. But they had something going that was too good to pass up just because of some damfool misunderstanding, and that was for sure. He looked at his watch. No—it would have to wait. At this time of night she'd still be at the Persimmon.

On with the business then. He lifted the receiver off

the hook and asked for a number in the Loop. When the connection was made, he said, 'I'd like to speak to Jason Mettner on the crime desk.'

Farrell left the Buick where he had found it. The owner could puzzle out the mystery of the extra fifteen miles on the trip meter, and the low gasoline level.

He waited ten minutes in the lane to get his timing right with the patrols, and then climbed the wall and made his way back into the house via the stackpipe and the kitchen roof. He was just easing down the corridor window when light flooded over him. He swung around. Silvana's bedroom door was open and she was leaning against the jamb with her arms folded, watching him.

She was wearing a black robe trimmed with egret over a black nightgown. Black hair, black eyes in a pale face, crimson lips curving. 'I said I'd take a rain check,' she whispered. 'I'd like to pick it up now. Come on in.'

Farrell panicked. 'Jesus, honey, not now!' he said. 'Not tonight, baby. I can't.' *For Christ's sake not now, not tonight of all nights, when the phone is going to ring at any moment with a message for Sanguinetti that will have the whole household astir in a matter of minutes! Please not now!*

The black eyes flicked from Farrell to the window and back again. 'You broke out to see some dame!' Silvana accused.

'With you in the house? Don't make me laugh!' Farrell said desperately. 'No. Honest. I . . . I had some business to attend to. Personal.'

'So I'm still in the house. I got personal business too. Come on in and attend to it.'

He shook his head. 'Baby, I can't. Too difficult to explain, but it's strictly no dice tonight.'

Silvana's dark eyes were stormy. The pupils were unnaturally large. Her hand went up to the egret trimming at her throat, and Farrell saw the tiny red marks left by the needle as the sleeve fell away from the hol-

low of her arm. With things lined up and ready to go, that was all he needed—a nympho junkie on his back! 'I think you better,' she said in a low voice. 'If you don't want your little . . . business trip . . . advertised.'

Farrell bit his lip. This was a hell of a time to have the bite put on you! But he couldn't cave in: it would louse up everything. He would just have to try and bluff it through. 'Don't threaten me, kid,' he growled. 'It ain't healthy.'

'Not many guys have refused me when I offered. Most times *they* ask.'

He shrugged and turned away. 'I'm sorry. Maybe some other time.'

The assault caught him totally unprepared. The fingers at Silvana's throat clenched, ripped robe and nightgown open to the waist . . . and then she was on him. Nails raked down his unscarred cheek. A hand hooked into the fly of his pants and burst it open. His arm was seized and he was dragged toward the door.

Farrell stumbled off balance and fell, pulling her down on top of him. She pummeled her bared breasts with small, sharp fists, opened her mouth, and screamed.

A man's voice shouted. Feet pounded along the hallway. Somebody else called from farther away. Two of the hoods from downstairs appeared in the doorway with drawn guns. 'Ok,' one grated. 'Stay just where you are.'

Sanguinetti appeared with Gatta, Venice and a man Farrell had never seen before. They were all wearing pajamas, but the gang leader had found time to run a comb through his hair and slip on a crimson silk robe. 'So what is going on?' he asked quietly, tying the belt at the waist.

'The bastard tried to rape me!' Silvana panted. 'Been in here . . . trying to con me . . . half an hour. I didn't want to disturb you, Sal—but when he . . . I yelled when he tried to lay me by force.'

'Al and me heard her squawk,' the first hood said. 'We

come up here and found 'em on the floor. Sure looked like he was tryin' to make her.'

Sanguinetti stared at the two of them—Farrell with his open fly, his hair mussed, and small beads of blood welling from the scratches on his face; the girl with her garments torn and red marks stippling the naked flesh of her breasts. 'And what do you have to say?' he asked the undercover man.

'Only that it ain't true. None of it. I couldn't sleep so I took a walk. I thought I saw somebody out in the yard. I was going to push up the window to take a looksee when her door opens and she tries to ask me in. As soon as I say nix on that, she starts tearing her clothes and mine and yells blue murder.'

'Sal, that isn't true! That's not the way it was. He talks his way in and he tries to make—'

'Shuddup! So you thought you'd take a little walk, huh?' Sanguinetti said softly. 'Just along the corridors and around the house . . . In a hat?' He pointed to Farrell's fedora, which had rolled underneath a chair in the struggle.

'I figured I could do with some fresh air, maybe a turn around the garden,' Farrell said.

Sanguinetti looked at him. 'I went up to your room an hour ago. There was something I wanted to talk to you about. You know what I found.'

Farrell knew he had struck out. If the gang leader had been up to the tower room, he was wise to the fact that his absence had been planned, and that it was meant to be secret: the dummy in the bed would prove that. But he dare not alibi himself from Silvana's accusations; the only way to do that would be to say where he had really been—and that would bitch up the whole deal he had so carefully planned. He was stuck with it. Though whether it was worse to flick the old man on the raw as a boss or as a proud Sicilian male it was hard to say. His lined face was pale with anger; his nostrils were pinched and his hooded eyes glittered.

Somewhere downstairs the phone was shrilling. Farrell sighed in relief.

One of the lobby guards ran up to Sanguinetti and said: 'It's some kind of stoolie, boss. Says he has a sure-fire tip-off. But he'll only speak to you personal.'

'Bring them both to my room,' Sanguinetti said. He turned and limped toward the stairway.

By the time Farrell and the girl were hustled into the big second-floor study, he was sitting behind the desk with the receiver held to his ear. '... *What* did you say? ... Where? ... They never! Well, of all the nerve! ... We shall have to see about that. Friends of mine would not approve at all ... Yeah, I guess you can rely on us. Thank you, Spike.'

He slammed the receiver back on the hook and spoke to Venice and Gatta. 'Whaddya know, boys: that was Spike Florian of the Parnassus Grill. He tells me he got a tip-off there's some loner with a mob of outa town boys running in two trucks of bonded liquor tonight! They aim to place it around the inner circle—my inner circle!—and quit Cook County before midday!'

'Are we gonna knock it off?' Gatta asked.

'You bet your sweet life! I'm not having punks from the sticks bustin' in on my territory and pull a deal like that. We'll teach those guys a lesson and take the liquor ourselves.' Sanguinetti looked around the room. 'Roberto, Joe—alert every man we got. Tell Fingers to ready three autos. Check the artillery. We gotta get out to Oakwood and there ain't too much time.'

'What about these two?' Gatta asked.

Sanguinetti was rising from behind the desk. He leaned on his hands and stared at Farrell and Silvana. 'Don't know. Both the stories smell. A guy doesn't fix a dummy in his bed if he's just takin' a walk. On the other hand, he don't wear a hat if he's sneakin' down only one floor to try and lay a broad. I'll decide what to do when we get back. Tie Faroli to that chair right now, and see he's tied good. You ...' He turned his somber

gaze on the girl. 'You stay here and guard him. And don't let me down again.'

He walked over to Farrell, plucked the .38 from his holster, and handed it to Silvana. 'We'll see later, but I think you may have made one big mistake, mister,' he said to the undercover man.

As Farrell was thrust down into the ladderback in front of the desk, he wondered why the man who had arrived with Sanguinetti, the hood he hadn't seen before, had been looking at him so searchingly ever since the alarm had been given.

Fourteen

The warehouse was run night and day, with two twelve-hour shifts . . . unmolested by the state authorities other than an occasional raid. But notification of twenty-four hours was always given . . . The entire Genna enterprise was done with the full knowledge, consent and approval of the police of Chicago . . . Each month said warehouse was visited by 400 uniformed police and by squads—sometimes four per month—out of the central bureau. It was visited, moreover, by representatives with stars but not in uniform, commonly known around the warehouse as representatives of the State's attorney's office of Cook County . . .

'On occasions when truckloads of alcohol would be going to different parts of the city and they would be intercepted by strange policemen, complaint was lodged by the Gennas. It was arranged then between the Gennas and the squads in central detail as follows: when a long haul was to be made through strange territory, the Gennas on the preceding night would call certain numbers and say, "Tomorrow at seven". On the next morning at seven a uniformed squad of police would remain in the offing until a truckload of alcohol would start from the Genna warehouse. This squad would convoy them through the zones of danger . . .

The Gennas for said protection paid, monthly, large sums, which rose from a small amount in the beginning

to about \$6,500 in April of 1925. Moreover, said police received in addition thereto much alcohol at a discount price to permit the Gennas publicly to operate said stills and system of distribution.'

Part of twenty-five page confession made to Federal investigating officers by a former office manager of the Gennas.

Big Louie sticks his thumb in my ear and wakes me half way into tomorrow. 'On your feet, Fingers,' he says. 'There's a big job on, and we're all out.' I boil up a cup of Java and hike out to the garage to fix up the jalopies. We take the Essex tourer and the Nash and, of course, the Caddy. I am piloting the Caddy as usual with Roberto beside me and the boss and Joe in back. Big Louie takes the Nash with half a dozen of the boys; the rest of them ride in the tourer with Seifert, some new guy who hits town from the East, Big Louie tells me, with a recommendation from Dutch Schultz.

'Go through the Loop and then head northwest for Morton Grove and Niles,' the boss tells me. 'It's a hijack,' he says. 'I want to lay up in some side street in a place called Oakwood. And you better step on it, because we only have a half hour.'

Well, it's eighteen decimal seven miles on the trip meter, and we make it in twenty-four minutes flat, I'm telling you. I'm hitting eighty, eighty-five most of the way, once we cross the river, and the moon she's still over there in the west, though it can't be far from sun-up. We find a dirt road under some trees, nice and quiet, and we lie up there with the motors idling. Pretty soon a convoy goes past on the main drag, heading into town. 'That's it!' the boss says. 'Two yellow trucks labeled United Fruit. Get out there and go, Fingers!'

The trucks are big six-wheelers, and there's a touring flivver scouting ahead with a Packard roadster riding shotgun at the rear. We tail them for maybe two blocks, and then the boss gives me the high sign and I shift

down and tread on the pedals as I pull out to overtake. The others are hanging back, wearing no lights—the plan being for me to sail past like I am a college boy on the way home from some roadhouse, and it is only when we begin blasting the trucks that the Nash and the Essex come up to block the Packard. And by this time we should be free to hit the flivver.

At first all is strictly per. The convoy rolls along around fifty, and I nurse the Caddy up to seventy in the intermediate as we draw level with the first truck. Roberto and Joe have the windows wound down, and now they poke out the typewriters and rat-a-tat-tat at the cab. I see the flame from the Thompsons flicker on the yellow panels of the second truck, and then we're steaming past his cab too, and the guys in there take their medicine as Roberto and Joe empty their ukuleles.

It is after this that the deal turns sour on us. First off, the birds in that Packard are smarter than we think. They have glommed on to the situation so fast that by the time Big Louie pulls out to pass them, they already have sawed-off shotguns poking out the rear of the soft-top. So instead of the Nash hitting the Packard, it's wham! bang! before they're even level! The Nash skitters across the roadway, hits a wall, and then turns turtle and catches fire.

I pull up on the sidewalk behind a street-car shelter and we pile out. But the first truck has run up the ass of the second, and the two of them scream across the street and wrap themselves around a refuge. One of them falls over and all of a sudden there are cases of liquor busting all over the road. You should hear the noise!

Me and Joe and Roberto and the boss are now in a jam more than somewhat. On one side the two wrecked trucks block the highway and give the characters in the flivver all the cover they need. On the other side the Packard has stopped and they're firing at us over the hood. And behind them the flaming Nash is cutting off Seifert and the rest of the boys in the Essex from coming to our rescue!

Suddenly Big Louie appears out of the flames. His clothes and his hair are on fire and he's screaming. He flops around until some dude steps out from behind the Packard and cuts him down with a typewriter. Everything is happening at once then. Roberto bangs in another drum and drops the dude. Joe turns around and blasts off at some guys have spilled outa the flivver and shoot at us from behind the trucks. There are slugs flying over our heads like they was bees and we was a garden of roses.

'Boys,' the boss says, 'this ain't so hot as a situation. In fact,' he says, 'right now I can think of many situations I am preferring to be in than this one. I figure it is a smart thing to do to hop over this wall and take it on the lam until we reach Seifert and the others, because here we are cut off and taking it from both sides at the same time.'

We are screened some by the shelter and by the Caddy, which is now fuller of holes than a million-dollar bill. The wall is about as tall as Big Louie before he croaks. So we crouch on the running board and we give the boss a leg up, and then Joe. I am scrambling over next, bent as low as a prize fighter who pretends he receives one considerably below the belt, because the air around that part of Illinois is too full of lead for my liking. I reach back for Roberto, being as how there is nobody left below to shove him up. And just as he is astride this wall, the dude he has dropped staggers to his feet in the middle of the roadway and weaves toward us with a gat in his fist.

The boss pulls out that kraut pistol he has and plugs the guy, but not before he has emptied his magazine into Roberto. It is very curious, Roberto is facing me and all of a sudden blood starts coming out of him everywhere—out of his nose and his mouth and his ears and even his eyes. Then two holes open up in his forehead and his cheek, and blood pumps out of those too, before he falls back on to the Caddy.

The boss isn't looking: he is staring very close at the

guy he hits. This character is lying on his back in the street, and apart from what is left of the moonlight, he is lit by the flames from the burning Nash. 'My God,' the boss says, kind of slow, 'that is no loner,' he says. 'That is Pat Mullooney of the McGrath mob!'

While he says this Joe swings around, because two guys from the flivver have had the same idea as us and hopped the wall. They are running toward us through the market garden we find ourselves in, blasting the peas and beans and suchlike. But as they only have .38s and Joe has still half a drum in the typewriter, he gets in first because of the longer range and they drop. It is when he collects their artillery that he discovers who they are. 'Jesus,' he says to the boss. 'Those are representatives of the law, like I mean the men in blue!'

Well of course the boss is strictly fazed. 'If the guys riding shotgun are McGrath's mob,' he mutters, 'and that flivver is full of flatfeet, this is no freelance load that we hijack—it is a scheduled McGrath run, complete with police escort! I think it is time we get out of here,' the boss says.

Down behind the wall, we hike it past the burning wreck and surface beyond the Essex. There is quite a shooting party that goes on in this part of town. The boys are lined up in a trench that someone leaves in the sidewalk, firing at the Packard. McGrath's mob fires back, and what with one thing and another it is becoming more than a little unhealthy in Oakwood. Then a little guy with one arm in a sling dodges out from behind the Packard and lobs a pineapple. It lands pretty near the trench and—Boof! We have casualties.

'Rats Hofner!' Joe says. And then him and me and the boss stage a private Fourth of July over the top of the wall, just to make the guys in the Packard keep their heads down. Hofner gets caught in the draft and performs a little solo dance—after he has hit the ground. But by this time we are running for the Essex. Seifert has left the motor running, though he himself is taking

a rest on a pile of sand at the end of the trench. It looks like the rest will be permanent, since the sand is mostly red and he has stopped so many slugs you could tear him in half like a postage stamp. But before he croaks, he calls the boss over and whispers something into his ear.

Meanwhile I am gunning the Essex around in a U-turn that is in direct contravention of the traffic regulations. Joe and the boss swing aboard and Joe says: 'What about the others?' 'The meat wagon can get them to the hospital quicker than we can,' the boss replies. 'Step on it; Fingers.'

By now the cops are milling around the Caddy, shouting, and already I can hear sirens in the distance. I step on it.

The boss is very quiet all the way home, and then, as we are passing the Standard Oil building, Joe asks him: 'What the hell happens?'

'Someone pulls a fast one on me,' the boss says. 'A very fast one indeed. I fall for it and I am tricked into an attempt to hijack a scheduled run with a police escort. Furthermore,' he says, 'I am responsible for breaking the truce, for rubbing out at least two of McGrath's torpedoes, and for losing most of my own boys. In addition I write off two cops.' He is speaking kind of soft, like between his teeth, and it is clear that he is a very angry man indeed. 'This means,' he says, 'that the Northsiders will be after me, O'Mara will be after me, and my ass will be in a sling with the Big Fellow himself. I am loused up on every side. In fact I may find it necessary to take a short holiday, but before I go I am going to find out who pulls this fast one and put him in his place.'

'Where is his place?' I ask. As if I didn't know!

'Six feet underground,' the boss says.

Fifteen

'Set for Rapid Fire, the Thompson sub-machine gun will dispense six hundred .45 caliber bullets per minute, including reloading, which can be effected by an expert in four seconds. The magazines are circular drums carrying fifty or a hundred shots . . . Thompson sub-machine gun fire will cut down a tree twenty-four inches in diameter at a distance of thirty feet and will penetrate quarter-inch steel armorplate.'

Contemporary small-arms manual

Bruno Farrell sat and wondered whether he had done the right thing, whether he had done any of the right things. There was a lot on the debit side—the death of the boy Lardner and the anguish of his parents, the brutalizing of the saloon keepers and the shooting of the barman, the lives that would be lost, were probably being lost at this minute, tonight. For all these he was at least indirectly responsible. How would these stack up in the final reckoning against that 'greater good' of which George Stevens had so glibly spoken? Had Stevens the right to determine what was the greater good? Had any man? Farrell was too much of an individualist to take refuge in the I-was-only-carrying-out-orders excuse. The fact that he had himself engineered the fake tip-off that had lured Sanguinetti into attacking his supposed ally made him equally responsible for the fresh

outburst of gang war that would probably follow. And if it didn't? How would the right intentions weigh in the balance against the wrong result? He gave it up. His not to reason why, he thought bitterly. Well, he had done what he could; now it looked as though he might be going to die.

Hearing Princey talk about the planned hijack of the Aiellos' brandy, he had figured that McGrath must have some kind of records system. It had been a long shot that he would actually find a blueprint for a future operation that could be sold to Sanguinetti as an outsider's intrusion, but it had paid off... for everyone except Farrell himself! And he was stuck now, either to be revealed as the double-crosser who had fixed the plant, or branded as the would-be ravisher of the boss's moll! Either way the prospects looked gloomy.

For the twentieth time he tested the wire binding him to the chair. His arms had been pulled over the ladder-back and his wrists secured to the lowest rung; his elbows were lashed together and his ankles wired to the two front legs. It was useless trying to struggle: it only cut the wire deeper into his flesh.

Silvana came back into the room. She had left him alone a half hour ago, after a period in which she had sulked behind the desk and refused to talk. Now the hot black eyes were glistening again and her walk was springy. Farrell could see the extra needle-mark on her arm.

'So the big shot lover's finally cut down to size!' she taunted.

'I never held out to be anythin' special in that line,' Farrell said.

'Oh, but you gotta be! You got so many beautiful girls you have to break out at night to see them!' Silvana said mockingly. 'You got so many broads hanging around you, you got no time for Silvana!' She moved slowly toward him. 'Am I really so unattractive to you, Bruno? Do I really do nothing for you? Do I make you cringe? I

really wanna know. But first maybe we should see just what the demon lover's got to offer the others, huh? Maybe I should just take a looksee.'

She stood above him and Farrell shrank back against the chair. There was a mad light in her eyes. He felt the black wiry hair tickle his face as she leaned over his bound body. Hands fumbled in the still unfastened opening of his trousers. He caught his breath, feeling the air of the room cool on his skin.

Silvana stood back with a satisfied smile. 'There!' she said softly. 'Oh-ho, those lucky dames! Now look at me, Bruno; are you sure, real sure, I don't excite you maybe just a little?' She moved to the desk and altered the position of the lamp so that the pool of light was cast on to the floor in front of Farrell's chair. Then, stepping deliberately into the illumination, she began slowly to strip off the torn robe and the nightgown.

Farrell clenched his teeth and tried not to look at the pale gyrating body, the dark triangle at its center, the subtle planes of hip and waist, and the slender breasts swaying above. Suddenly she was at the side of the chair, pressing against him, the fingers of one hand expertly caressing. He turned his head away. There was sweat on his forehead.

'There!' Silvana murmured. 'You see? ... Maybe I do ... have something ... just a little something ... for you!'

'What are you trying to prove?' Farrell asked hoarsely.

She giggled. 'I already proved it, didn't I? Look at yourself, Bruno!' Abruptly she straightened up, straddled his bound legs, and then lowered herself slowly on to him. Farrell gasped. 'There's something else I could prove now, at that,' she said.

She took his averted head between her palms and forced it around to face her. 'Sal's kind of particular, and he don't forget things,' she said. 'Seeing as how ... I accused you ... he'll likely want to ... examine us

both . . . when he comes back. Like for evidence, see . . . Well . . . he's gonna . . . find it . . . now, isn't he?"

Farrell stared at the crazy, triumphant face moving slowly up and down in front of his eyes. 'You tricky bitch!' he said.

The door swung open. 'You dirty, two-timing little tramp!' Sanguinetti's voice shouted almost in echo of Farrell's own. Silvana scrambled off his knees, her eyes wide with alarm. Before she could speak, the Luger in the gang leader's hand spat flame three times. Hurled back by the impact of the heavy 9 mm slugs, the girl crashed into the desk and slid to the floor. From beneath one obscenely outflung leg, runnels of blood trickled glistening into the pool of light. Sanguinetti was white-faced with fury. He had been played for a sucker all along the line tonight; now this last insult to his pride was too much. He limped into the room and emptied the rest of the magazine into the girl's naked body. 'Bitch!' he rasped as the bullets smacked into the lifeless flesh. 'Whore! Slut! Filth! Tramp!'

Farrell scarcely breathed, expecting the gun to be turned on him. But Sanguinetti slammed another clip into the magazine, shoved the automatic into his topcoat pocket and walked to the door without looking at him. 'Get this bum cleaned up and outa that chair,' he said to Joe Venice, who was standing in the doorway expressionless as ever. 'Then bring him down to the car. We're going to take a little ride. Him and me have something personal to discuss.'

The sky was paling over the lake as Fingers Palucci drove the Essex tourer out through the open gates and headed away from the empty house. Farrell sat in the back with Sanguinetti. Joe Venice was swiveled around in the front passenger seat, his sloe eyes fixed on the undercover man's face, his gun hidden by the padded squab.

They drove north and west until they hit Wabash, crossed to South Clark through the still sleeping Max-

well Street Jewish quarter, and then sped on through the Loop until they crossed the river. Here, after the grime of Smoky Hollow, were the huddled, squalid tenements of Little Sicily, a square mile of slum housing nearly 100,000 immigrants, overlooked to the east by the *Tribune* tower and the unattainable penthouse apartments of the rich living in skyscraper blocks on Lake Shore Drive. Palucci made a left turn and they followed the northern branch of the river, past gasworks, iron foundries, wharves and lumber yards, until finally the Essex bumped across a weed-grown vacant lot and rolled to a standstill a hundred yards inside an auto junkyard. 'All right,' Sanguinetti said. 'Get out and walk toward the river.'

Farrell shivered as he stepped to the muddy ground. If this was to be his last view on earth, it looked like he had crossed the Styx already, for no scenarist creating a twentieth-century inferno could have dreamed up a scene more hellish than the one he was looking at. Through the heavy, sulphurous atmosphere, he saw the serrated roofs of factories above a string of coal barges moored on the far side of the polluted water. Flame seared the violet sky to the west over the yawning mouths of blast furnaces. The few remaining stars were too far off to be of any help.

Farrell walked down a lane between towering piles of wrecked automobile bodies, Dodges and Buicks and De Sotos, Pontiacs and Chryslers and Fords, stacked in a rigor of buckled steel and crumpled, rusting panels. 'I don't get it, Mr. Sanguinetti,' he said. 'I never tried to lay your girl. What you saw and heard when you came in should have proved that to you.'

Sanguinetti was half a dozen paces behind, 'cradling a Thompson submachine gun in his arms. He said nothing.

Farrell tried again. 'Ok, I broke out,' he said. 'I had to see a dame. Not Princey Hartz. I guess I shouldn't of . . . but is that reason enough to rub out a good gun?'

'I came up to your room earlier tonight,' Sanguinetti said suddenly, 'with a new soldier, a man called Seifert. He thought he had seen you before. He'd been rum-running on the east coast, working out of Massachusetts.'

Jesus! A cold chill of premonition ran clear down to the soles of Farrell's feet. The guy who'd kept on looking at him . . . a bootlegger who'd been working Farrell's old area . . .

'Seifert croaked after the fight at Oakwood,' the dry voice went on remorselessly. 'But he wised me up before he died.'

Farrell had reached the water's edge. He looked down at black, scummed ripples sucking at rotted piers. Across the river, light shone from the tall windows of a warehouse, silhouetting a row of derricks. A cold breeze carried the stench of decomposing skins from a tannery beyond the junkyard. *If you're in a tight corner, don't expect any last minute rescue.* Was this then the way it was all to end—the short plunge into foul and depthless waters after the leaden whip across the back? The thumping of the heart stilled by the awful clamor of a Thompson?

'A dick!' Sanguinetti's contemptuous voice itself cut like a whip. 'A lousy goddam Fed snooper! In my own mob! Well, we know how to deal—'

The roar of shotguns and the hammering of a typewriter cut short his words. Farrell whirled around, expecting the agony of slugs in his flesh. In the half light of dawn he saw that a Packard roadster had careered into the yard. It rocked to a momentary halt by Sanguinetti's Essex with flame belching from the near side. Fingers Palucci slumped dead over the wheel with half his head blown away. Joe Venice was caught in the open. The gun in his hands spat twice before he was cut down by a hail of fire. Sanguinetti was hosing the Thompson at the roadster, the weapon bucking in his frail hands as the muzzle blazed.

The Packard jerked forward, skidded around through a gap in the line of wrecks, and then accelerated away to the gates up a parallel lane. Before it disappeared, a figure toppled over the open side, rolled in the dust, and then lay still.

As the howl of its motor faded, Sanguinetti swung back toward the river—but Farrell had already taken his chance. He was sprinting up the next alley in a desperate attempt to reach the gap before the gang leader could drop him. He flung himself around the corner as the Thompson erupted. Slugs scuffed the earth, clattered in the wreckage, and screamed off into the approaching day. The body of the man who had fallen from the Packard lay at the corner of the first alley, a revolver near one outflung arm. If Farrell could get to it before Sanguinetti appeared in the gap . . .

Footsteps pounded unevenly on the far side of the stack of scrap iron. Farrell dashed up to the fallen body. It was Hymie Loeb, pale eyes filmed over, white splinters of bone pricking through the bloody ruin of his chest. Evidently McGrath must have followed them there, hell-bent on revenge after the ambush of his convoy.

Farrell scooped up the gun and ran. He didn't have time to make the cover offered by the Essex, and it was pointless playing ring-of-roses from alley to alley when Sanguinetti commanded greater fire power and a longer range. He dodged back to the stack of smashed auto bodies and hauled himself, panting, up among them.

Sanguinetti limped through the gap and stood in the alley, swinging the barrel of the submachine gun to left and right. Farrell was about seven feet off the ground, crouched on the floor of a gutted sedan whose stained Bedford cord upholstery stank of mildew and decay. Around him were crumpled radiators, smashed fenders, buckled wheels, and the rusting spars of coachwork from which the working parts had long since been torn away to expose an oil-caked viscera of tubes and wires. Many

of the skeletons in this mechanical graveyard were precariously balanced on the stack; the slightest move could provoke a minor avalanche of twisted steel. There was a rusty spring shackle on the floor by Farrell's knee. Cautiously he picked it up and lobbed it through the glassless window. There was a sudden clatter and a shifting of metal lower down the stack to his right.

The Thompson in Sanguinetti's hands shuddered and spat flame. More ironwork fell somewhere in the stack. The gang leader walked slowly forward, peering into the tangle of wrecks. In the silence, Farrell heard a shunting locomotive chuffing in some nearby marshalling yard, clattering a line of box cars into a siding. He looked around for something else to throw. There was nothing—shreds of upholstery, cotton waste, rats' droppings in a corner, a length of corroded wire too light to carry. Carefully, he broke Loeb's Colt .45. There were seven shots in the chamber. Three had been fired. He shook the spent cartridge cases into his hand and threw them as far as he could.

Tinkling, jangling, they dropped down through the complex of metal. The Thompson thundered again—but only for half a dozen shots. As Farrell had hoped, the magazine was expended. A ricochet whined past the sedan, and something heavy—a wheel? a seat? a detached fender?—dropped in the center of the stack. Sanguinetti cursed and reached inside his topcoat.

Farrell stood on the footboard outside the doorless tonneau of the sedan, the revolver in his hand. 'Drop the typewriter!' he called.

Sanguinetti spun on his bad foot, lost his balance and sat down heavily in the mud. His hand came out of his coat holding one of the smaller, fifty-shot Thompson drums. 'Put in that clip and you're a dead man!' Farrell shouted. He jumped from the footboard to a dented hood and from there sprang to the ground a few feet away from the gang boss.

'You wouldn't dare—flatfoot!' Sanguinetti sneered. 'I'm

gonna blow you to hell, where you belong! I guess you figured it was real smart, pulling that hijack deal tonight. Well, let me tell you—'

'You're forgetting who's got the drop on who!' Farrell cut in. He lined up the revolver on Sanguinetti's forehead. 'Move that drum another inch and I'll blow your head off!'

'Oh yeah? You and who else? You haven't got the guts! You're yellow all through, like all the goddam do-gooders!' Sanguinetti's face was a mask of hatred and contempt. The big boss veneer that went with the bodyguards and the lake-shore house had cracked, and the one-time Sicilian slum-dweller was showing through. Even so, even though he was sitting on the ground and Farrell stood over him with a gun, the man still radiated an undeniable power.

The dawn wind blew cold on the sweat dewing Farrell's forehead. He could sap Sanguinetti and run for it . . . and stay a marked man, on the spot for the rest of his life. Failing that, there were only two things he could do: he could turn him in to the police for the murder of Silvana; or he could shoot him. If he turned him in . . . he could hear George Stevens' clear, precise tones again: *if one man knows your true identity, that man can talk and you'll be blown . . .* He would be no more use to Stevens, in Chicago or anywhere else. But to kill in cold blood . . . *The law is greater than the individual . . . suppress your conscience for the greater good . . .* Was it really true that violence could only be countered by violence?

The sky overhead was flushed with a faint pink. Across the river a plume of white steam rose into the air and the scream of a factory hooter scythed across the dark water. Seifert, Joe Venice and Palucci were dead. Sanguinetti was now the only man alive who knew Farrell's secret. He was a murderer many times over. Farrell thought of Bill Lardner, of the girl, Silvana Montes-

sori, of all the people who might eventually be saved if he was allowed to continue his work . . .

'Well, what are you waiting for?' the gangster sneered, almost as though he could read Farrell's thoughts. 'You know you're out on a limb; you can't do nothing but croak me—and I tell you, you ain't got the guts!'

My formal instructions to you . . . do whatever is necessary to avoid your cover being blown.

'Or is it the fix? Is that what you're waiting for?' the rasping voice went on. 'I guess you can be bought like anyone else. How much do you want? How many G's to put up that gat, to stop you gabbing, to forget the whole deal? Fifty? A hundred?' Sanguinetti's face had cracked open into a wolfish smile. Beneath the hooded lids, the dark eyes bored into Farrell's so compellingly that he almost missed the imperceptible movement of the drum toward the breech of the Thompson, the sudden lightning flick of the hand. Almost, but not quite.

Farrell swallowed.

And squeezed the trigger.

Epilogue

Jason Mettner left *The Globe* building and walked past the garish strip of dance halls, flophouses, saloons, brothels, pawnshops, cheap burlesques and seedy hotels leading North La Salle Street into the Loop. He wandered through the raucous crowds thronging the sidewalks, his hat on the back of his head, a folded newspaper sticking out of his pocket and an unlit cigarette in his mouth. Snatches of hot music, razzmatazz chorus-line singing and gin-mill piano vied with the honking of auto horns in the congested nighttime canyons of State Street and Wabash Avenue. He sauntered under the elevated, crossed to Calumet, and finally stopped at the corner of 35th Street. He went in to the Persimmon.

Hard riding jazz blared out over the waves of drunken conversation and laughter as he entered the crowded, smoky club. The Pack of Aces hadn't replaced Bill Lardner, but now there was a black chick singing with the band—a plump twenty-year-old in a tight blue dress fringed with amber beads and hung about with ropes of artificial pearls and necklaces of polished wood. She stood at one corner of the high stage and snapped her fingers while Rusty Sampson blew. Mettner pushed his way to the bar and found himself standing next to Lieutenant Mulligan.

The policeman's face was flushed. His wide mouth was

curved into a grin and he was tapping a glass of rye on the counter in time to the music. It was evident that he was slightly drunk.

'Hey, Jason, boy!' he said affably. 'What'll it be?'

Mettner slid on to a bar stool. 'I didn't expect to see *you* here,' he said. 'An officer of the law with liquor in his hand! Make mine a whiskey sour, thanks—as if it tasted any different.'

'I'm celebratin',' Mulligan said solemnly after he had given the order. He took a long pull of his drink, nodded his head several times, and winked. Mettner raised his eyebrows. 'A rich uncle died? A horse came in?'

Mulligan twitched the newspaper from Mettner's pocket, opened it out, and read aloud: ' "Gang War Rages Again on North Side" . . . "Seven Hoods, Two Police Slain in Oakwood Battle" . . . "Sanguinetti, Loeb, Venice Massacred in Junkyard Coup". Ain't that something to celebrate, bud?'

'Even the two cops?'

'They was convoyin'. They deserved what they got,' Mulligan said. He bent the paper so that the dim purple light above the bar fell on the lead story beneath the banners and read again: ' "From our special crime reporter, Jason Mettner." That's good for you, boy! "Roberto Gatta, Patrick Mullooney and David Rats Hofner were killed in a fresh outbreak of the booze war early yesterday morning when members of a Syndicate gang led by Salvatore Sanguinetti attempted to hijack a consignment of illicit liquor being run through Oakwood by the McGrath mob. The battle, which followed several months without a major gang killing, left four other hoodlums dead and several injured on the highway. Police who intervened lost two men killed. In what appeared to be a reprisal raid later the same night, Hyman Loeb, Joseph Venice and gang boss Sanguinetti himself fell, along with Franklyn Fingers Palucci, to a fusillade fired by the Grim Reaper himself in an auto junkyard north of Little Sicily. It can be expected that

this latest racketeers' bloodbath will not be without its gory sequel in Chicago's unrelenting crime wave" . . . etcetera, etcetera.'

Mulligan refolded the paper. 'And you can say that again,' he observed. 'In fact it's started already.' He pointed to a small item at the foot of the front page. The headline read: **NAKED BRUNETTE WAS LAKESIDE SLAYER'S VICTIM.**

'Sanguinetti's moll,' the policeman said. 'And I heard before I left the precinct house that the Aiellos tossed a bomb into McGrath's trucking warehouse this afternoon. You see what I mean?'

'And you're celebrating?' Mettner asked.

'Sure I'm celebratin'. Let 'em all come! It's what I was hopin' for. Maybe the feds'll get some sense into them now and give us some action.'

Mettner smiled. 'I'm kind of celebrating myself,' he said. 'That story's gotten me a permanent assignment on the crime desk. What's yours?'

'Make mine a rye. There's just two things I want to ask you,' Mulligan said. He lurched closer to the newspaperman, focusing his eyes on Mettner's face with some difficulty. 'Number one—how come you got a scoop on that story? How come you was the only news hawk even to get a smell of it? Number two—where does your precious scar-face warrior fit in . . . and where is he now? There's no mention of Faroli in the whole goddam story.'

Mettner shrugged. 'They could be connected,' he said. The unlit cigarette was still hanging from his lip. He prised it away, dropped it to the floor, and flipped another into his mouth from a crumpled pack. 'Faroli called me late last night at the office—before all this started,' he said.

'Is that so? Is that a fact?' Mulligan struck a match and held it out. 'And what did he have to say?'

Mettner leaned forward, sucked in smoke, and then tilted his head back to blow it toward the ceiling. 'He

said if I wanted a good story . . . and if I really wanted to help stop the crime wave . . . I should wait exactly an hour and then call a certain number and repeat a message he would give me, word for word.'

Something was going on around the bandstand. The laughter and chatter died down a little as the drinkers watched a middle-aged man with a bald head take an alto saxophone out of its case and climb up to join the musicians. Rusty Sampson stamped in four, and they went into a medium bounce blues with a plaintive melody played by the cornet and clarinet in thirds, while the sax man doodled arpeggios behind.

'And the number he gave you?' Mulligan asked.

'Sanguinetti's home. I was to speak to nobody but the boss himself. I was to say I was a saloon keeper called Florian . . . and the rest was a rundown on the McGrath shipment, times, routes, description, the whole works. Only the way I was told it, it wasn't a McGrath run at all but a freelance consignment run in by an outsider.'

Mulligan nodded slowly. 'Very neat. He was calling from outside someplace. The hour's delay would be to give him time to get back. Then this tip-off comes that tricks Sanguinetti into attacking a supposed ally—with the results we've seen. Now why would your man want to do that, d'you suppose?'

Mettner shrugged. 'Search me. He's a strange guy. You and me talked about this before. Like he don't fit somehow. Maybe he had a grudge against the boss. How should I know?'

The lieutenant's brow was furrowed in thought. The stick of gum emerged from the pocket of his vest. 'You made the call, of course,' he said absently as he unwrapped it.

'Sure I made the call. Obviously there was a story there. Then I told them to hold the front page, and grabbed me a photographer and one of the paper's automobiles and broke every city speed restriction getting

out to Oakland as fast as I could. We had a grandstand view of the whole thing.' He tapped the paper on the bar. 'As you see.'

'You didn't think to make one other tip-off call?' Mulligan said softly. 'Like to the police, I mean?'

Mettner laughed aloud. 'In Chicago?' he said.

The lieutenant's jaws closed like a bear trap over the gum. His face flushed a dark red and he swiveled on his stool to look at the band. The cornet and clarinet leaned their heads together to play a muted two-bar riff as the singer stepped center-stage. The alto man stood up behind her, improvising punchy obligatos between each line she sang.

Easy rider, hit this burg today

On a southbound rattler, a side-door pullman car.

Seen him here, and he was on the hog.

Oh, easy rider, got to stay away.

So he had to vamp it, but the hike ain't far.

He's gone where the Southern cross the Yellow Dog . . .

'So where was Faroli himself while all this was goin' on?' Mulligan asked finally, staring at the pianist as he pounded out a chorus.

Mettner spoke through the smoke from his jerking cigarette. 'Your guess is as good as mine. He certainly wasn't around when the guns were blazing—and I've looked for him all over, since. Nix. Zero. No dice.' He shook his head. 'He lost me my "Anatomy of a Gangster" piece, but he got me moved to the crime desk, which is swell. All the same, I'd of liked to know more about that bastard.'

Chewing, the lieutenant sighed. 'Ay, it's a pity of him. We put out a call for him too. Material witness. But it was . . . unproductive. So where is he now, Jason? Where is he at all?'

Mettner reached for his drink. 'Scrammed, vamoosed,

taken it on the lam? Shacked up some place waiting for his scar to heal, maybe? Princey, the blonde used to sing here, she's taken a powder too. Jesus, how do I know? The black girl's husky voice sobbed through the smoke-filled room.

Easy rider, kiss this burg goodbye.

Yes, he had to ease it and he cain't come back.

He's gone where the Southern cross the Yellow Dog.

Over the staccato jangle of the rhythm section, the clarinet and saxophone wailed in interlocking arabesques as the cornet clawed its way up the scale toward the long high note that led them in to the last chorus.

Somewhere in the city a man with a scarred face rested up in the care of a blonde. Somewhere among the millions swarming through those acres of stone and brick and glass a man who was truly alone awaited the next assignment that would place his life in jeopardy. Somewhere under the stars an honest man whose personal account was already one death in the red was wrestling with the rights and wrongs of his calling. And in Washington, as the headlines screamed of more gang killings in the Windy City, a gray man picked up the phone and asked for a secret number. 'Mr. President,' he said. 'I have the honor to report that the first phase of the operation has been successfully completed . . .'

Don't Miss These Other Outstanding Dale Mysteries

- ☐ **Anatomy of a Murder** by Robert Traver. This is the 3 million copy best seller that is an Otto Preminger film starring Jimmy Stewart and Lee Remick. 512pp., \$1.95
- ☐ **Murder As Usual** by Hugh Pentecost. A master of suspense presents a political assassination after which David Cotter must find the real killer of the man who almost became the president. 256pp., \$1.75
- ☐ **The Plastic Nightmare** by Richard Neely. After a brutal car crash, Dan Marriott has a rebuilt face and no memory. Though his wife and mistress tell him of his previous life, they do not tell him there is a killer. 196pp., \$1.75
- ☐ **A Rich and Dangerous Game** by Lionel White. They planned to hijack a fortune from the Greek millionaire's yacht on the high seas but they couldn't foresee love and fate. 304pp., \$1.95

And These Superb Collections

- ☐ **The Case of the Murderer's Bride** and other stories by Erle Stanley Gardner. 188pp., \$1.50
- ☐ **Cops and Capers** edited by Ellery Queen including Rex Stout, Charlotte Armstrong, Julian Symons and others. 188pp., \$1.50
- ☐ **Crimes and Consequences** edited by Ellery Queen including Georges Simenon, Harry Kemelman, Michael Innes and others. 188pp., \$1.50

To order complete this form and mail this page today:

1. Put an X in the box beside the titles you have selected.
2. Enclose the amount of your purchase(s) plus 50¢ in check or money order.
3. Mail to Dale Books, 380 Lexington Ave., New York, N.Y. 10017

Name

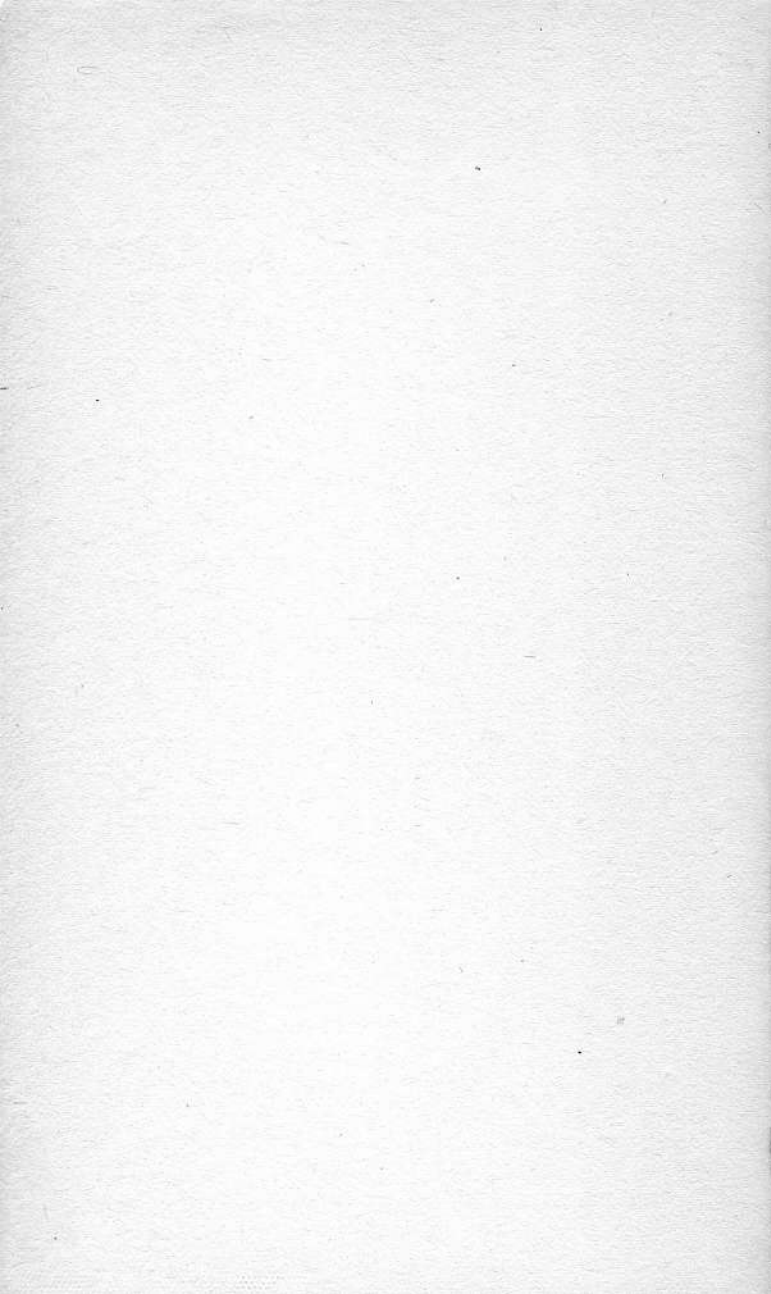
Address

City

State Zip

Please allow 6-8 weeks for delivery

104



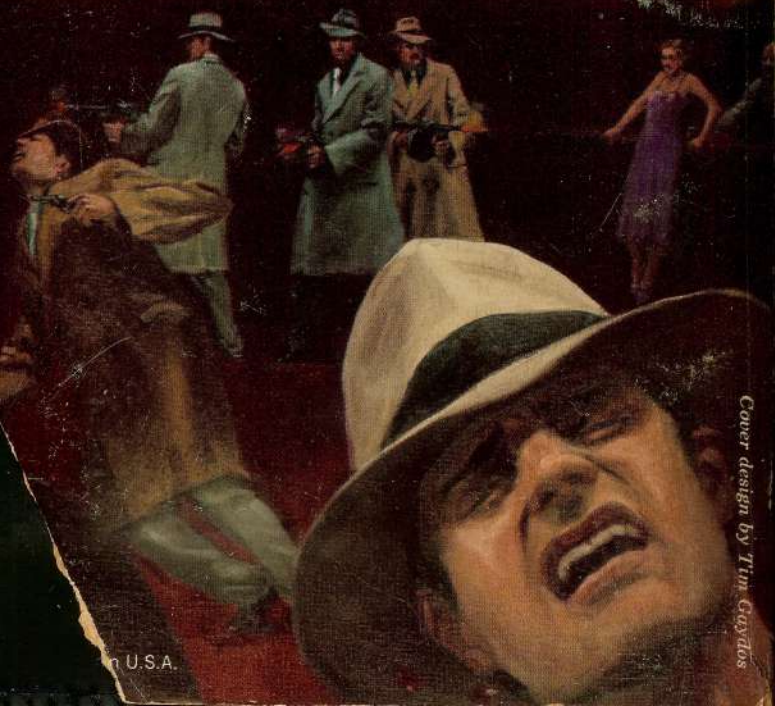
In 1925 Al Capone moved into a 50-room suite at the Metropole Hotel, and after a decade of bootlegging, he had 60 per cent of the city's police force on his payroll.

Bruno Faroli, because of his Italian background and because of his spotless record as a prohibition agent, is selected to infiltrate the underworld in Chicago.

ONE DEATH IN THE RED

blazes with the brutal crimes of gangland and tells the story of the men who used guns and booze and women.

First in a series of Chicago crime novels



in U.S.A.

Cover design by Tim Gwydos